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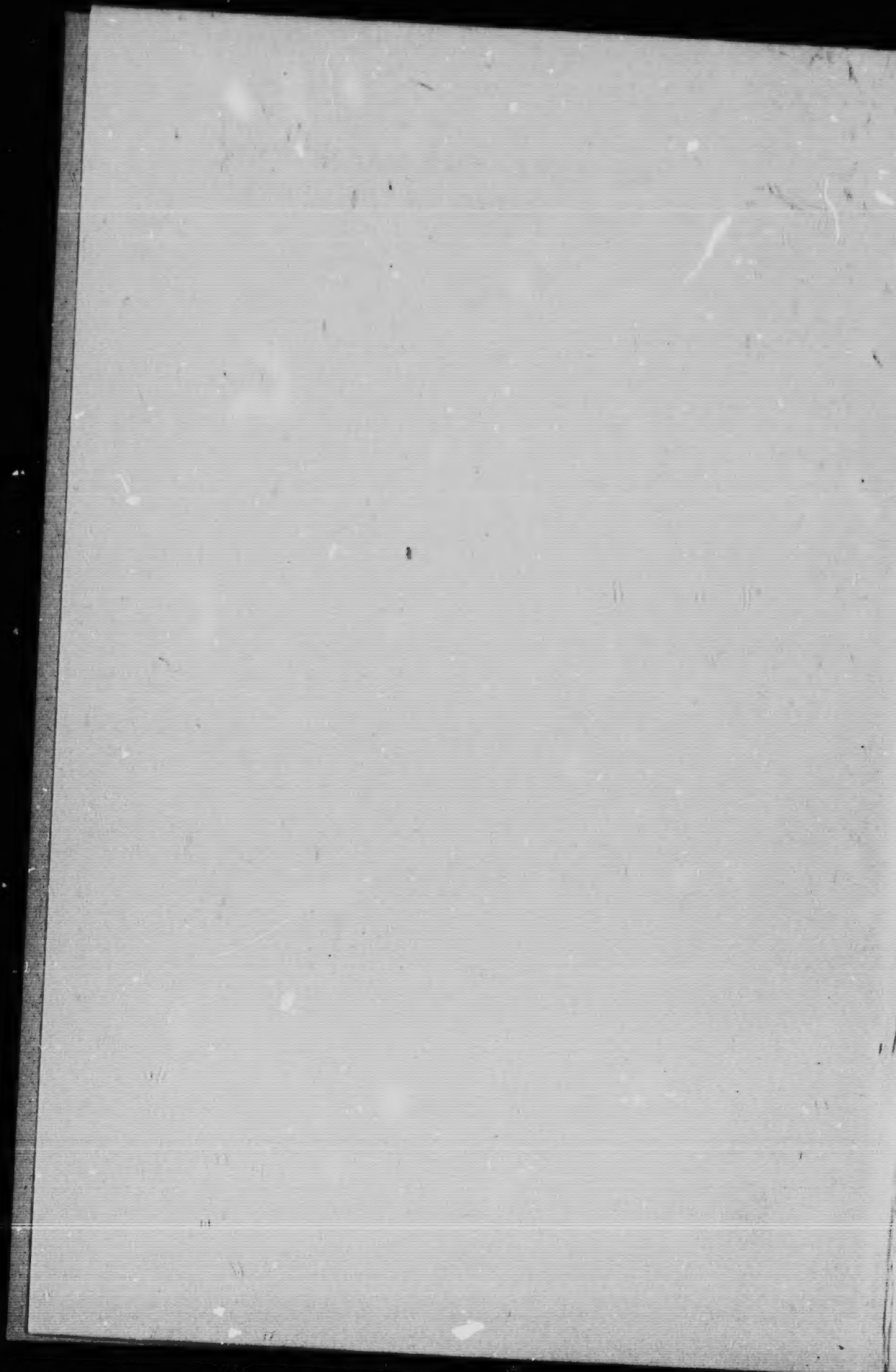
Joseph Becke

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BY REEF AND PALM AND
THE EBBING OF THE TIDE

TORONTO
THOMAS ALLEN

BY THE REEF AND WALL AND
THE FERRING OF THE TIDE

THE TIDE A FOUR WALL

**BY REEF AND PALM
AND THE EBBING OF
THE TIDE *By* LOUIS BECKE**

**TORONTO
THOMAS ALLEN**

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THE TIDE & LOUIS BECKE
AND THE EBBING OF
MAY AND PALM

TORONTO

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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BY REEF AND PALM

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Introduction.

WHEN in October, 1870, I sailed into the harbour of Apia, Samoa, in the ill-fated *Albatross*, Mr. Louis Becke was gaining his first experiences of island life as a trader on his own account by running a cutter between Apia and Savaii.

It was rather a notable moment in Apia, for two reasons. In the first place, the German traders were shaking in their shoes for fear of what the French squadron might do to them, and we were the bearers of the good news from Tahiti that the chivalrous Admiral Clouet, with a very proper magnanimity, had decided not to molest them; and, secondly, the beach was still seething with excitement over the departure on the previous day of the pirate Pease, carrying with him the yet more illustrious "Bully" Hayes.

It happened in this wise. A month or two before our arrival, Hayes had dropped anchor in Apia, and some ugly stories of recent irregularities in the labour trade had come to the ears of Mr. Williams, the English consul. Mr. Williams, with the assistance of the natives, very cleverly seized his vessel in the night, and ran her ashore, and detained Mr. Hayes pending

the arrival of an English man-of-war to which he could be given in charge. But in those happy days there were no prisons in Samoa, so that his confinement was not irksome, and his only hard labour was picnics, of which he was the life and soul. All went pleasantly until Mr. Pease—a degenerate sort of pirate who made his living by half bullying, half swindling lonely white men on small islands out of their cocoanut oil, and unarmed merchantmen out of their stores—came to Apia in an armed ship with a Malay crew. From that moment Hayes's life became less idyllic. Hayes and Pease conceived a most violent hatred of each other, and poor old Mr. Williams was really worried into an attack of elephantiasis (which answers to the gout in those latitudes) by his continual efforts to prevent the two desperadoes from flying at each other's throat. Heartily glad was he when Pease—who was the sort of man that always observed *les convenances* when possible, and who fired a salute of twenty-one guns on the Queen's birthday—came one afternoon to get his papers "all regular," and clear for sea. But lo! the next morning, when his vessel had disappeared, it was found that his enemy Captain Hayes had disappeared also, and the ladies of Samoa were left disconsolate at the departure of the most agreeable man they had ever known.

However, all this is another story, as Mr. Kipling says, and one which I hope Mr. Becke will tell us more fully some day, for he knew Hayes well, having acted as supercargo on board his ship, and shared a shipwreck and other adventures with him.

But even before this date Mr. Becke had had as

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much experience as falls to most men of adventures in the Pacific Ocean.

Born at Port Macquarrie in Australia, where his father was clerk of petty sessions, he was seized at the age of fourteen with an intense longing to go to sea. It is possible that he inherited this passion through his mother, for her father, Charles Beilby, who was private secretary to the Duke of Cumberland, invested a legacy that fell to him in a small vessel and sailed with his family to the then very new world of Australia. However this may be, it was impossible to keep Louis Becke at home; and, as an alternative, an uncle undertook to send him, and a brother two years older, to a mercantile house in California. His first voyage was a terrible one. There were no steamers, of course, in those days, and they sailed for San Francisco in a wretched old barque. For over a month they were drifting about the stormy sea between Australia and New Zealand a partially dismasted and leaking wreck. The crew mutinied—they had bitter cause to—and only after calling at Rurutu in the Tubuai Group and obtaining fresh food did they permit the captain to resume command of the half-sunken old craft. They were ninety days in reaching Honolulu, and another forty in making the Californian coast.

The two lads did not find the routine of a merchant's office at all to their taste; and while the elder obtained employment on a cattle ranche, Louis, still faithful to the sea, got a berth as clerk in a steamship company, and traded to the Southern ports. In a year's time he had money enough to take passage in a schooner bound on a shark-catching

cruise to Christmas and Palmyra Islands in the North Pacific. The life was a very rough one, and full of incident and adventure—which I hope he will relate some day. Returning to Honolulu, he fell in with an old man who had bought a schooner for a trading venture amongst the Western Carolines. Becke put in \$1,000, and sailed with him as supercargo, he and the skipper being the only white men on board. He soon discovered that, though a good seaman, the old man knew nothing of navigation. In a few weeks they were among the Marshall Islands, and the captain went mad from delirium tremens. Becke and the three native sailors ran the vessel into a little uninhabited atoll, and for a week had to keep the captain tied up to prevent his killing himself. They got him right at last and stood to the westward. On their voyage they were witnesses of a tragedy (in this instance fortunately not complete), on which the pitiless sun of the Pacific has looked down very often. They fell in with a big Marshall Island sailing canoe that had been blown out of sight of land, and had drifted six hundred miles to the westward. Out of her complement of seventy people, thirty were dead. They gave them provisions and water, and left them to make Strong's Island (Kusaie), which was in sight. Becke and the chief swore Marshall Island *Bruderschaft* with each other. Years afterwards, when he came to live in the group, the chief proved his friendship in a signal manner.

The cruise proved a profitable one, and from that time Mr. Becke determined to become a trader and to learn to know the people of every group of the Pacific; and returning to California, he made

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for Samoa, and from thence to Sydney. But at this time the Palmer River gold rush had just broken out in North Queensland, and a brother who was a bank manager on the celebrated Charters Towers goldfields, invited him to come up, as every one seemed to be making his fortune. He wandered between the rushes for two years, not making a fortune, but acquiring much useful experience, learning amongst other things the art of a blacksmith, and becoming a crack shot with a rifle. Returning to Sydney, he sailed for the Friendly Islands (Tonga) in company with the king of Tonga's yacht—the *Taufaahau*. The Friendly Islanders disappointed him (at which no one that knows them will wonder), and he went on to Samoa, and set up as a trader on his own account for the first time. He and a Manhiki half-caste bought a cutter, and went into partnership, trading throughout the group. This was the time of Colonel Steinberger's brief tenure of power. The natives were fighting and the cutter was seized on two occasions. When the war was over he made a study of the language, and became a great favourite with the natives, as indeed seems to have been the case in most of the places he went to in Polynesia and Micronesia. From Samoa he was sent away in charge of a trading vessel under sealed orders to the Marshall Islands. These orders turned out to be to hand the vessel over to the notorious Captain "Bully" Hayes. (Some day he promises that he will give us the details of this very curious adventure.) He found Hayes awaiting him in his famous brig *Leonora* in Milli Lagoon. He handed over his charge and took passage with him in the brig. After some

months cruising in the Carolines they were wrecked on Strong's Island (Kusaie). Hayes made himself the ruler of the island, and Mr. Becke and he had a bitter quarrel. The natives treated the latter with great kindness, built him a house, and gave him land on the lee side of the Island, where he lived happily enough for five months. Hayes was captured by an English man-of-war, but escaped and went to Guam. Mr. Becke went back in the cruiser to the Colonies, and then again sailed for Eastern Polynesia, living in the Gambiers, Paumotus, and Easter and Pitcairn Islands. In this part of the ocean he picked up an abandoned French barque on a reef, floated her, and loaded her with cocoanuts, intending to sail her to New Zealand with a native crew, but they went ashore in a hurricane and lost everything. Meeting with the managing partner of a Liverpool firm he took service with them as a trader in the Ellice and Tokelau groups; finally settling down as a residential trader. Then he took passage once more for the Carolines and was wrecked on Peru, one of the savage Gilbert islands (lately annexed), losing every dollar that he possessed. He returned to Samoa and engaged as "recruiter" in the labour trade. He got badly hurt in an encounter with some natives and went to New Zealand to recover. Then he sailed to New Britain on a trading venture, and fell in with and had much to do with the ill-fated colonising expedition of the Marquis de Rayo in New Ireland. A bad attack of malarial fever, and a wound in the neck (labour recruiting or even trading among the blacks of Melanesia seems to have been a much less pleasant business than

residence among the gentle brown folk of the Eastern Pacific) made him leave and return to the Marshall Islands, where Lailik, the chief whom he had succoured at sea years before, made him welcome. He left on a fruitless quest after an imaginary guano island, and from then until two years ago he has been living on various islands in both the North and South Pacific, leading what he calls "a wandering and lonely but not unhappy existence," "Lui," as they call him, being a man both liked and trusted by the natives from lonely Easter Island to the far-away Pellews. During one of his visits to the Colonies he married a young Irish lady, a daughter of Colonel Maunsell of H.M. 11th Regiment, by whom he has two children. For the last two years he has been living in Australia and contributing South Sea stories to the Colonial papers. He is still in the prime of life, and whether he will now remain within the bounds of civilisation, or whether some day he will return to his wanderings as Odysseus is fabled to have done in his old age, I fancy that he hardly knows himself. But when once the charm of a wild roving life has got into a man's blood, the trammells of civilisation are irksome and its atmosphere is hard to breathe.

It will be seen from this all-too-condensed sketch of Mr. Becke's career that he knows the Pacific as few men alive or dead have ever known it. He is one of the rare men who have led a very wild life and have the culture and talent necessary to give some account of it. As a rule, the men who know don't write, and the men who write don't know.

Every one who has a taste for good stories will

feel, I believe, the force of these. Every one who knows the South Seas, and I believe many who do not, will feel that they have the unmistakable stamp of truth. And truth to nature is—*pace* Mr. Oscar Wilde—a great merit in a story, not only because of that thrill of pleasure hard to analyse, but largely made up of associations, memories, and suggestions, that faithfulness of representation in picture or book gives to the natural man; but because of the fact that nature is almost infinitely rich and the unassisted imagination of man but a poor and sterile thing, tending constantly towards some ossified convention. "Treasure Island" is a much better story than "The Wreckers," yet I, for one, shall never cease to regret that Mr. Stevenson did not possess when he wrote "Treasure Island," that knowledge of what men and schooners do in wild seas that was his when he gave us "The Wreckers." The detail would have been so much richer and more convincing.

It is open to any one to say that these tales are barbarous, and what Mrs. Meynell, in a very clever and amusing essay, has called "decivilised." Certainly there is a wide gulf separating life on a Pacific island from the accumulated culture of centuries of civilisation in the midst of which such as Mrs. Meynell move and have their being. And if there can be nothing good in literature that does not spring from that culture, these stories must stand condemned. But such a view is surely too narrow. Much as I admire that lady's writings, I never can think of a world from which everything was eliminated that did not commend itself to the dainty taste of herself and her friends without a feeling of impatience and

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suffocation. It takes a huge variety of men and things to make a good world. And ranches and cañons, veldts and prairies, tropical forests and coral islands, and all that goes to make up the wild life in the face of nature or, among primitive races, far and free from the artificial conditions of an elaborate civilisation, form an element in the world the loss of which would be bitterly felt by many a man who has never set foot outside his native land.

There is a certain monotony perhaps about these stories. To some extent this is inevitable. The interests and passions of South Sea Island life are neither numerous nor complex, and action is apt to be rapid and direct. A novelist of that modern school that fills its volumes, often fascinatingly enough, by refining upon the shadowy refinements of civilised thought and feeling, would find it hard to ply his trade in South Sea Island society. His models would always be cutting short in five minutes the hesitations and subtleties that ought to have lasted them through a quarter of a lifetime. But I think it is possible that the English reader might gather from this little book an unduly strong impression of the uniformity of Island life. The loves of white men and brown women, often cynical and brutal, sometimes exquisitely tender and pathetic, necessarily fill a large space in any true picture of the South Sea Islands, and Mr. Becke, no doubt of set artistic purpose, has confined himself in the collection of tales now offered almost entirely to this facet of the life. I do not question that he is right in deciding to detract nothing from the striking effect of these powerful stories, taken as a whole, by interspersing

amongst them others of a different character. But I hope it may be remembered that the present selection is only an instalment, and that if it finds favour with the British public we may expect from him some of those tales of adventure, and of purely native life and custom, which no one could tell so well as he.

June, 1894.

PEMBROKE

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Challis the Doubter.

THE WHITE LADY AND THE BROWN WOMAN.

FOUR years had come and gone since the day that Challis, with a dull and savage misery in his heart, had, cursing the love-madness which once possessed him, walked out from his house in an Australian city with an undefined and vague purpose of going "somewhere" to drown his sense of wrong and erase from his memory the face of the woman who, his wife of not yet a year, had played with her honour and his. So he thought, anyhow.

You see, Challis was "a fool"—at least so his pretty, violet-eyed wife had told him that afternoon with a bitter and contemptuous ring in her voice when he had brought another man's letter—written to her—and with an impulsive and jealous haste had asked her to explain. He was a fool, she had said, with an angry gleam in the violet eyes, to think she could not "take care" of herself. Admit receiving that letter? Of course! Did he think she could help other men writing silly letters to her? Did he not think she could keep out of a mess? And she smiled

the self-satisfied smile of a woman conscious of many admirers and of her own powers of intrigue.

Then Challis, with a big effort, gulping down the rage that stirred him, made his great mistake. He spoke of his love for her. Fatuity! She laughed at him, said that as she detested women, his love was too exacting for her if it meant that she should never be commonly friendly with any other man.

Challis looked at her steadily for a few moments, trying to smother the wild flood of black suspicion aroused in him by the discovery of the letter and confirmed by her sneering words, and then said quietly but with a dangerous inflexion in his voice—

“Remember—you are my wife. If you have no regard for your own reputation, you shall have some for mine. I don’t want to entertain my friends by thrashing R——, but I’m not such a fool as you think. And if you go further in this direction you’ll find me a bit of a brute.”

Again the sneering laugh—“Indeed! Something very tragic will occur, I suppose?”

“No,” said Challis, grimly, “something very prosaic—common enough among men with pretty wives—I’ll clear out.”

“I wish you would do that now,” said his wife, “I hate you quite enough.”

Of course she didn’t quite mean it. She really liked Challis in her own small-souled way—principally because his money had given her the social pleasures denied her during her girlhood. With an unmoved face and without farewell he left her and went to his lawyer’s.

A quarter of an hour later he arose to go, and the lawyer asked him when he intended returning.

"That all depends upon her. If she wants me back again, she can write, through you, and I'll come—if she has conducted herself with a reasonable amount of propriety for such a pretty woman."

Then, with an ugly look on his face, Challis went out; next day he embarked in the *Lady Alicia* for a six months' cruise among the Islands of the North-west Pacific.

That was four years ago, and to-day Challis, who stands working at a little table set in against an open window, hammering out a ring from a silver coin on a marlinspike and vyce, whistles softly and contentedly to himself as he raises his head and glances through the vista of cocoanuts that surround his dwelling on this lonely and almost forgotten island.

"The devil!" he thinks to himself, "I must be turning into a native. Four years! What an ass I was! And I've never written yet—that is, never sent a letter away. Well, neither has she. Perhaps, after all, there was little in that affair of R——'s. . . . By God! though, if there was, I've been very good to them in leaving them a clear field. Anyhow, she's all right as regards money. I'm glad I've done that. It's a big prop to a man's conscience to feel he hasn't done anything mean; and she likes money—most women do. Of course I'll go back—if she writes. If not—well, then, these sinful islands can claim me for their own; that is, Nalia can."

A native boy with shaven head, save for a long tuft

on the left side, came down from the village, and, seating himself on the gravelled space inside the fence, gazed at the white man with full, lustrous eyes.

"Halloa, *tama*!" said Challis, "whither goest now?"

"Pardon, Tialli. I came to look at thee making the ring. Is it of soft silver—and for Nalia, thy wife?"

"Ay, O Shaven Head, it is. Here, take this *masi* and go pluck me a young nut to drink," and Challis threw him a ship-biscuit. Then he went on tapping the little band of silver. He had already forgotten the violet eyes, and was thinking with almost childish eagerness of the soft glow in the black orbs of Nalia when she should see his finished handiwork.

The boy returned with a young cocoanut, unhusked. "Behold, Tialli. This nut is a *ute ga'au*, sweet husk. When thou hast drunk the juice give it me back, that I may chew the husk which is sweet as the sugar-cane of Samoa," and he squatted down again on the gravel.

Challis drank, then threw him the husk and resumed his work. Presently the boy, tearing off a strip of the husk with his white teeth, said, "Tialli, how is it that there be no drinking-nuts in thy house?"

"Because, O turtle-head, my wife is away; and there are no men in the village to-day; and because the women of this *motu** : no thought that the *papalagi*† may be parched with thirst, and so come

* Island or country.

† Foreigner.

not near me with a cocoanut." This latter in jest.

"Nay, Tialli. Not so. True it is that to-day all the men are in the bush binding *fala* leaves around the cocoanut trees, else do the rats steal up and eat the buds and clusters of little nuts. And because Nalia, thy wife, is away at the other White Man's house no woman cometh inside the door."

Challis laughed. "O evil-minded people of Nukunono! And must I, thy *papalagi*, be parched with thirst because of this?"

"*Faiaga oe*, Tialli, thou but playest with me. Raise thy hand and call out 'I thirst!' and every woman in the village will run to thee, each with a drinking-nut, and those that desire thee, but are afraid, will give two. But to come inside when Nalia is away would be to put shame on her."

The white man mused. The boy's solemn chatter entertained him. He knew well the native customs; but, to torment the boy, he commenced again.

"O, foolish custom! See how I trust my wife. Nalia. Is she not even now in the house of another white man?"

"True. But, then, he is old and feeble, and thou young and strong. None but a fool desires to eat a dried flying-fish when a fresh one may be had."

"O, wise man with the shaven crown," said Challis, with mocking good nature, "thou art full of wisdom of the ways of women. And if I were old and withered, would Nalia then be false to me in the house of another and younger white man?"

"How could she? Would not he, too, have a

wife who would watch her? And if he had not, and were *nese nea* (single), would he be such a fool to steal that which he can buy—for there are many girls without husbands as good to look on as that Nalia of thine. And all women are alike," and then, hearing a woman's voice calling his name, he stood up.

"Farewell, *O ulu tula poto*" (Wise Baldhead), said Challis, as the boy, still chewing his sweet husk, walked back to the native houses clustered under the grove of *pua* trees.

Ere dusk, Nalia came home, a slenderly-built girl with big dreamy eyes, and a heavy mantle of wavy hair. A white muslin gown, fastened at the throat with a small silver brooch, was her only garment, save the folds of the navy-blue-and-white *lava lava* round her waist, which the European-fashioned garment covered.

Challis was lying down when she came in. Two girls who came with her carried baskets of cooked food, presents from old Jack Kelly, Challis's fellow-trader. At a sign from Nalia the girls took one of the baskets of food and went away. Then, taking off her wide-brimmed hat of *fala* leaf, she sat down beside Challis and pinched his cheek.

"O lazy one! To let me walk from the house of Tiaki all alone!"

"Alone! There were three of thee."

"*Tapā!* Could I talk to *them!* I, a white man's wife, must not be too familiar with every girl; else they would seek to get presents from me with sweet words. Besides, could I carry home the fish and cooked fowl sent thee by old Tiaki? That would be

unbecoming to me, even as it would be if thou climbed a tree for a cocoanut"—and the Daughter of the Tropics laughed merrily as she patted Challis on his sunburnt cheek.

Challis rose, and going to the little table took from it the ring.

"See, Nalia, I am not lazy as thou sayest. This is thine."

The girl, with an eager *Aue!* took the bauble and placed it on her finger. She made a pretty picture, standing there in the last glow of the sun as it sank into the ocean, her languorous eyes filled with a tender light.

Challis, sitting on the end of the table regarding her with half-amused interest as does a man watching a child with a toy, suddenly flushed hotly: "By God, I can't be such a fool as to begin to *love* her in reality, but yet . . . come here, Nalia," and he drew her to him, and, turning her face up so that he might look into her eyes, he asked:

"Nalia, hast thou ever told me any lies?"

The steady depths of those dark eyes looked back into his, and she answered:

"Nay, I fear thee too much to lie. Thou mightst kill me."

"I do but ask thee some little things. It matters not to me what the answer is. Yet see that thou keepest nothing hidden from me."

The girl, with parted lips and one hand on his, waited.

"Before thou became my wife, Nalia, hadst thou any lovers?"

"Yes, two—Kapua and Tafu-le-Afi."

"And since?"

"May I choke and perish here before thee if I lie! None."

Challis, still holding her soft brown chin in his hand, asked her one more question—a question that only one of his temperament would have dared to ask a girl of the Tokelaus.

"Nalia, dost thou love me?"

"Aye, *alefa tuman* (everlasting love). Am I a fool? Are there not Letia, and Miriami, and Elinē, the daughter of old Tiaki, ready to come to this house if I love any but thee? Therefore my love is like the suckers of the *fa's* (octopus) in its strength. My mother has taught me much wisdom."

A curious feeling of satisfaction possessed the man, and next day Letia, the "show" girl of the village, visiting Challis's store to buy a tin of salmon, saw Nalia the Lucky One seated on a mat beneath the seaward side of the trader's house, surrounded by a billowy pile of yellow silk, diligently sewing.

"Ho, dear friend of my heart! Is that silken dress for thee? For the love of God, let me but touch it. Four dollars a fathom it be priced at. Thy husband is indeed the king of generosity. Art thou to become a mother?"

"Away, silly fool, and do thy buying and pester me not."

Challis, coming to the corner of the house, leant against a post, and something white showed in his hand. It was a letter. His letter to the woman of violet eyes, written a week ago, in the half-formed idea of sending it some day. He read it through,

and then paused and looked at Nalia. She raised her head and smiled. Slowly, piece by piece, he tore it into tiny little squares, and, with a dreamy hand-wave, threw them away. The wind held them in mid-air for a moment, and then carried the little white flecks to the beach.

"What is it?" said the bubbling voice of Letia the Disappointed.

"Only a piece of paper that weighed as a piece of iron on my bosom. But it is gone now."

"Even so," said Letia, smelling the gaudy label on the tin of salmon in the anticipative ecstasy of a true Polynesian, "*pe se mea fa'agotoimoana* (like a thing buried deep in ocean). May God send me a white man as generous as thee—a whole tin of *samani* for nothing! Now do I know that Nalia will bear thee a son."

And that is why Challis the Doubter has never turned up again.

“’Tis in the Blood.”

WE were in Manton's Hotel at Levuka—Levuka in her palmy days. There were Robertson, of the barque *Rotumah*; a fat German planter from the Yasawa group; Harry the Canadian, a trader from the Tokelaus—and myself.

Presently a knock came to the door, and Allan, the boatswain of our brig, stood hat in hand before us. He was a stalwart half-caste of Manhiki, and, perhaps, the greatest *manaia* (Lothario) from Ponape to Fiji.

“Captain say to come aboard, please. He at the consul's for papers—he meet you at boat,” and Allan left.

“By shingo, dot's a big fellow,” said planter Oppermann.

“Ay,” said Robertson, the trading skipper, “and a good man with his mauleys, too. He's the champion knocker-out in Samoa, and is a match for any Englishman in Polynesia, let alone foreigners”—with a sour glance at the German.

“Well, good-bye all,” I said; “I'm sorry, Oppermann, I can't stay for another day for your wedding, but our skipper isn't to be got at anyhow.”

The trading captain and Harry walked with me part of the way, and they commenced the usual Fiji *gap*.

"Just fancy that fat-headed Dutchman going all the way to Samoa and picking on a young girl and sending her to the Sisters to get educated properly! As if any old beach-girl isn't good enough for a blessed Dutchman. Have you seen her?"

"No," I said; "Oppermann showed me her photo. Pretty girl. Says she's been three years with the Sisters in Samoa, and has got all the virtues of her white father, and none of the vices of her Samoan mammy. Told me he's spent over two thousand dollars on her already."

Robertson smiled grimly: "Ay, I don't doubt it. He's been all round Levuka cracking her up. I brought her here last week, and the Dutchman's been in a chronic state of silly ever since. She's an almighty fine girl. She's staying with the Sisters here till the marriage. By the Lord, here she is now coming along the street! Bet a dollar she's been round Vagadace way, where there are some fast Samoan women living. 'Tis in the blood, I tell you."

The future possessor of the Oppermann body and estate was a pretty girl. Only those who have seen fair young Polynesian half-castes—before they get married, and grow coarse, and drink beer, and smoke like a factory chimney—know how pretty.

Our boat was at the wharf, and just as we stood talking Allan sauntered up and asked me for a dollar to get a bottle of gin. Just then the German's *fiancée* reached us. Robertson introduced Harry and myself to her, and then said good-bye. She stood there in

the broiling Fijian sun with a dainty sunshade over her face, looking so lovely and cool in her spotless muslin dress, and withal so innocent, that I no longer wondered at the Dutchman's "chronic state of silly."

Allan the Stalwart stood by waiting for his dollar. The girl laughed joyously when Harry the Canadian said he would be at the wedding and have a high time, and held out her soft little hand as he bade her adieu and strolled off for another drink.

The moment Harry had gone Allan was a new man. Pulling off his straw hat, he saluted her in Samoan, and then opened fire.

"There are many *teine lalelei* (beautiful girls) in the world, but there is none so beautiful as thou. Only truth do I speak, for I have been to all countries of the world. Ask him who is here—our supercargo—if I lie. O, maid with the teeth of pearl and face like *Fetuaa* (the morning star), my stomach is drying up with the fire of love."

The sunshade came a little lower, and the fingers played nervously with the ivory handle. I leant against a cocoanut tree and listened.

"Thy name is Vaega. See that! How do I know? Aha, how do I? Because, for two years or more, whenever I passed by the stone-wall of the Sisters' dwelling in Matafele, I climbed up and watched thee, O Star of the Morning, and I heard the other girls call thee Vaega. Oho! and some night I meant to steal thee away."

The rascal! He told me two days afterwards that the only time he ever climbed the Mission wall was to steal mangoes.

The sunshade was tilted back, and displayed two big, black eyes, luminous with admiring wonder.

"And so thou hast left Samoa to come here to be devoured by this fat hog of a Dutchman! Dost thou not know, O foolish, lovely one, that she who mates with a *Siamani* (German) grows old in quite a little time, and thy face, which is now smooth and fair, will be coarse as the rind of a half-ripe breadfruit, because of the bad food these swine of Germans eat?"

"Allan," I called, "here's the captain!"

There was a quick clasp of hands as the Stalwart One and the Maid hurriedly spoke again, this time in a whisper, and then the white muslin floated away out of sight.

The captain was what he called "no so dry"—viz., half-seas over, and very jolly. He told Allan he could have an hour to himself to buy what he wanted, and then told me that the captain of a steam collier had promised to give us a tug out at daylight. "I'm right for the wedding-feast after all," I thought.

But the wedding never came off. That night, Oppermann, in a frantic state, was tearing round Levuka hunting for his love, who had disappeared. At daylight, as the collier steamed ahead and tautened our tow-line, we could see the parties of searchers with torches scouring the beach. Our native sailors said they had heard a scream about ten at night and seen the sharks splashing, and the white liars of Levuka shook their heads and looked solemn as they told tales of monster sharks with eight-foot jaws always cruising close in to the shore at night.

Three days afterwards Allan came to me with a stolid face and asked for a bottle of wine, as Vaega was very sea-sick. I gave him the wine, and threatened to tell the captain. He laughed, and said he would fight any man, captain or no captain, who meddled with him. And, as a matter of fact, he felt safe—the skipper valued him too much to bully him over the mere stealing of a woman. So the limp and sea-sick Vaega was carried up out of the sweating foc'sle and given a cabin berth, and Allan planked down two twenty-dollar pieces for her passage to the Union Group. When she got better she sang rowdy songs, and laughed all day, and made fun of the holy Sisters. And one day Allan beat her with a deal board because she sat down on a bandbox in the trade-room and ruined a hat belonging to a swell official's wife in Apia. And she liked him all the better for it.

The fact Vaega was Mrs. Allan for just six months, when his erratic fancy was captivated by the daughter of Mauga, the chief of Tutuila, and an elopement resulted to the mountains. The subsequent and inevitable parting made Samoa an undesirable place of residence for Allan, who shipped as boatsteerer in the *Niger* of New Bedford. As for Vaega, she drifted back to Apia, and there, right under the shadow of the Mission Church, she flaunted her beauty. The last time I saw her was in Charley the Russian's saloon, when she showed me a letter. It was from the bereaved Oppermann, asking her to come back and marry him.

"Are you going?" I said.

"'Tis in the Blood."

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"*E pule le Atia*" (if God so wills), "but he only sent me twenty dollars, and that isn't half enough. However, there's an American man-of-war coming next week, and these other girls will see then. I'll make the *papalagi*¹ officers shell out. *To fa, alii.*"

¹ Foreign.

The Revenge of Macy O'Shea.

A STORY OF THE MARQUESSA.

I.

TIKENA the Club-Footed guided me to an open spot in the jungle-growth, and, sitting down on the butt of a twisted *toa*, indicated by a sweep of his tattooed arm the lower course of what had once been the White Man's dwelling.

"Like unto himself was this, his house," he said, puffing a dirty clay pipe, "square-built and strong. And the walls were of great blocks made of *panisina*—of coral and lime and sand mixed together; and around each centre-post—posts that to lift one took the strength of fifty men—was wound two thousand fathoms of thin plaited cinnet, stained red and black. *Apā!* he was a great man here in these *motu* (islands) although he fled from prison in your land; and when he stepped on the beach the marks of the iron bands that had once been round his ankles were yet red to the sight. There be none such as he in these days. But he is now in Hell."

This was the long-deferred funeral oration of Macy O'Shea, sometime member of the chain-gang

of Port Arthur, and subsequently runaway convict, beachcomber, cutter-off of whaleships, and Gentleman of Leisure in Eastern Polynesia. And of his many known crimes the deed done in this isolated spot was the darkest of all. Judge of it yourself.

The arrowy shafts of sunrise had scarce pierced the deep gloom of the silent forest ere the village woke to life. Right beside the thatch-covered dwelling of Macy O'Shea, now a man of might, there towers a stately *tamanu* tree; and, as the first faint murmur of women's voices arises from the native huts, there is a responsive twittering and cooing in the thickly-leaved branches, and further back in the forest the heavy booming note of the red-crested pigeon sounds forth like the beat of a muffled drum.

With slow, languid step, Sera, the wife of Macy O'Shea, comes to the open door and looks out upon the placid lagoon, now just rippling beneath the first breath of the trade-wind, and longs for courage to go out there—there to the point of the reef—and spring over among the sharks. The girl—she is hardly yet a woman—shudders a moment and passes her white hand before her eyes, and then, with a sudden gust of passion, the hand clenches. "I would kill him—kill him if there was but a ship here to get away! I would sell myself over and over again to the worst whaler's crew that ever sailed the Pacific if it would bring me freedom from this cruel, cold-blooded devil!"

A heavy tread on the matted floor of the inner room and her face pales to the hue of death. But Macy O'Shea is somewhat shy of his two years' wife this morning, and she hears the heavy steps recede as he walks over to his oil-shed. A flock of *goge* cast their shadow over the lagoon as they fly westward, and the woman's eyes follow them—"Kill him, yes. I am afraid to die, but not to kill. And I am a stranger here, and if I ran a knife into his fat throat, these natives would make me work in the taro-fields, unless one wanted me for himself." Then the heavy step returns, and she slowly faces round to the bloodshot eyes and drink-distorted face of the man she hates, and raises one hand to her lips to hide a blue and swollen bruise.

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The man throws his short, square-set figure on a rough native sofa, and, passing one brawny hand meditatively over his stubbly chin, says, in a voice like the snarl of a hungry wolf, "Here, I say, Sera, slew round; I want to talk to you, my beauty."

The pale, set face flushed and paled again. "What is it, Macy O'Shea?"

"Ho, ho, 'Macy O'Shea,' is it? Well, just this. Don't be a fool. I was a bit put about last night, else I wouldn't have been so quick with my fist. Cut your lip, I see. Well, you must forget it; any way, it's the first time I ever touched you. But you ought to know by now that I am not a man to be trifled with; no man, let alone a woman, is going to set a course for Macy O'Shea to steer by. And, to come to the point at once, I want you

to understand that Carl Ristow's daughter is coming here. I want her, and that's all about it."

The woman laughed scornfully. "Yes, I know. That was why——" She pointed to her lips. "Have you no shame? I know you have no pity. But listen. I swear to you by the Mother of Christ that I will kill her—kill you, if you do this."

O'Shea's cruel mouth twitched and his brows set, then he uttered a hoarse laugh. "By God! Has it taken you two years to get jealous?"

A deadly hate gleamed in the dark, passionate eyes. "Jealous, Mother of God! Jealous of a drunken, licentious wretch such as you! I hate you, hate you! If I had courage enough I would poison myself to be free from you."

O'Shea's eyes emitted a dull sparkle. "I wish you would, damn you! Yet you are game enough, you say, to kill me—and Malia?"

"Yes. But not for love of you. But because of the white blood in me. I can't—I won't be degraded by you bringing another woman here."

"'Por Dios,' as your dad used to say before the devil took his soul, we'll see about that, my beauty. I suppose because your father was a d——d garlic-eating, ear-ringed Dago, and your mother a come-by-chance Tahiti half-caste, you think he was as good as me."

"As good as you, O bloody-handed dog of an English convict. He was a man, and the only wrong he ever did was to let me become wife to a devil like you."

The cruel eyes were close to hers now, and the

rough, brawny hands gripped her wrists. "You spiteful Portuguese quarter-bred——! Call me a convict again and I'll twist your neck like a fowl's. You she-devil! I'd have made things easy for you—but I won't now. Do you hear?" and the grip tightened. "Ristow's girl will be here to-morrow, and if you don't knuckle down to her it'll be a case of 'Vamos' for you—you can go and get a husband among the natives," and he flung her aside and went to the god that ran him closest for his soul, next to women—his rum-bottle.

O'Shea kept his word, for two days later Mália, the half-caste daughter of Ristow, the trader at Ahunui, stepped from out her father's whaleboat in front of O'Shea's house. The transaction was a perfectly legitimate one, and Mália did not allow any inconvenient feeling of modesty to interfere with such a lucrative arrangement as this whereby her father became possessed of a tun of oil and a bag of Chilian dollars, and she of much finery. In those days missionaries had not made much headway, and gentlemen like Messrs. Ristow and O'Shea took all the wind out of the Gospel drum.

And so Mália, dressed as a native girl, with painted cheeks and bare bosom, walked demurely up from the boat to the purchaser of her sixteen-years'-old beauty, who, with arms folded across his broad chest, stood in the middle of the path that led from the beach to his door. And within, with set teeth and a knife in the bosom of her blouse bodice, Sera panted with the lust of Hate and Revenge.

The bulky form of O'Shea darkened the doorway. "Sera," he called in English, with a mocking, insulting inflexion in his voice, "come here and welcome my new wife!"

Sera came, walking slowly over with a smile on her lips and holding out her left hand to Mălia, said in the native language, "Welcome!"

"Why," said O'Shea, with mocking jocularly, "that's a left-handed welcome, Sera."

"Aye," said the girl with the White Man's blood, "my right hand is for this"—and the knife sank home into Mălia's yellow bosom. "A cold bosom for you to-night, Macy O'Shea," she laughed, as the value of a tun of oil and a bag of Chilian dollars gasped out its life upon the matted floor.

II.

The native drum was beating. As the blood-quickenning boom reverberated through the village, the natives came out from their huts and gathered around the House of the Old Men, where, with bound hands and feet, Sera, the White Man's wife, sat, with her back to one of the centre-posts. And opposite her, sitting like a native on a mat of *kapau*, was the burly figure of O'Shea, with the demon of disappointed passion eating away his reason and a mist of blood swimming before his eyes.

The people all detested her, especially the soft-voiced, slender-framed women. In that one thing savages resembled Christians—the deadly hatred with which women hate those of their sex whom they know to be

better and more pure than themselves. So the matter was decided quickly. Mesi—so they called O'Shea—should have justice. If he thought death, let it be death for this woman who had let out the blood of his new wife. Only one man, Loloku the Boar Hunter, raised his voice for her, because Sera had cured him of a bad wound when his leg had been torn open by the tusk of a wild boar. But the dull glare from the eyes of O'Shea fell on him and he said no more. Then at a sign from the old men the people rose from the mats and two unbound the cords of *afa* from the girl and led her out into the square and looked at O'Shea.

"Take her to the boat," he said.

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Ristow's boat had been hauled up, turned over, and covered with the rough mats called *kapau* to keep off the heat of the sun. With staggering feet, but undaunted heart, the girl Sera was led down. Only once she turned her head and looked back. Perhaps Loloku would try again. Then, as they came to the boat, a young girl, at a sign from O'Shea, took off the loose blouse, and they placed her, face downwards, across the bilge of the boat, and two pair of small, eager, brown hands each seized one of hers and dragged the white, rounded arms well over the keel of the boat. O'Shea walked round to that side, drawing through his hands the long, heavy, and serrated tail of the *fai*—the gigantic stinging-ray of Oceana. He would have liked to wield it himself, but then he would have missed part of his revenge—he could not have seen her face. So he gave it to a native, and watched, with the smile of a fiend, the

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white back turn black and then into bloody red as it was cut to pieces with the tail of the *fai*.

The sight of the inanimate thing that had given no sign of its agony beyond the shudderings and twitchings of torn and mutilated flesh was perhaps disappointing to the tiger who stood and watched the dark stream that flowed down on both sides of the boat. Loloku touched his arm—"Mesi, stay your hand. She is dead else."

"Ah," said O'Shea, "that would be a pity, for with one hand shall she live to plant taro."

And, hatchet in hand, he walked in between the two brown women who held her hands. They moved aside and let go. Then O'Shea swung his arm and the blade of the hatchet struck into the planking, and the right hand of Sera fell on the sand.

A man put his arms around her, and lifted her off the boat. He placed his hand on the blood-stained bosom and looked at Macy O'Shea.

"*E mate!*" he said.

* Dead.

The Rangers of the Tia Kau.

BETWEEN Nanomea and Nanomaga—two of the Ellice Group—but within a few miles of the latter, is an extensive submerged shoal, on the charts called the Grand Cocal Reef, but by the people of the two islands known as Tia Kau (The Reef). On the shallowest part there are from four to ten fathoms of water, and here in heavy weather the sea breaks. The British cruiser *Basilisk*, about 1870, sought for the reef, but reported it as non-existent. Yet the Tia Kau is well known to many a Yankee whaler and trading schooner, and is a favourite fishing-ground of the people of Nanomaga—when the sharks give them a chance.

One night Atupa, King of Nanomaga, caused a huge fire to be lit on the beach as a signal to the people of Nanomea that a *malaga*, or party of voyagers, was coming over. Both islands are low—not more than fifteen feet above sea-level—and are distant from one another about thirty-eight miles. The following night the reflection of the answering fire on Nanomea was seen, and Atupa prepared to send away his people in seven canoes. They would start at sundown, so as to avoid paddling in the heat

(the Nanomagans have no sailing canoes), and be guided to Nanomea, which they expected to reach early in the morning, by the reflection of the great fires of cocoanut and pandanus leaves kindled at intervals of a few hours. About seventy people were to go, and all that day the little village busied itself in preparing for the Nanomeans' gifts of foods—cooked puraka, fowls, pigs, and flying-fish.

Atupa, the heathen king, was troubled in his mind in those days of August, 1872. The *John Williams* had been there and landed a Samoan missionary, who had pressed him to accept Christianity. Atupa, dreading a disturbing element in his kingdom, had, at first, declined; but the ship had come again, and the king having consented to try the new religion, a teacher landed. But since then he and his chiefs had consulted the oracle, and had been told that the shades of Maumau Tahori and Foilagi, their deified ancestors, had answered that the new religion was unacceptable to them, and that the Samoan teacher must be killed or sent away. And for this was Atupa sending off some of his people to Nanomea with gifts of goodwill to the chiefs to beseech them to consult their oracles, also so that the two islands might take concerted action against this new foreign god, which said that all men were equal, that all were bad, and He and His Son alone good.

The night was calm when the seven canoes set out. Forty men and thirty women and children were in the party, and the craft were too deeply laden for any but the smoothest sea. On the *ama* (outrigger) of

each canoe were the baskets of food and bundles of mats for their hosts, and seated on these the children, while the women sat with the men and helped them to paddle. Two hours' quick paddling brought them to the shoal-water of Tia Kau, and at the same moment they saw to the N.W. the sky-glare of the first guiding fire.

It was then that the people in the first canoe, wherein was Palu, the daughter of Atupa, called out to those behind to prepare their *asa* (balers), as a heavy squall was coming down from the eastward. Then Laheü, an old warrior in another canoe, cried out that they should return on their track a little and get into deep water; "for," said he, "if we swamp, away from Tia Kau, it is but a little thing, but here——" and he clasped his hands rapidly together and then tore them apart. They knew what he meant—the sharks that, at night-time forsaking the deep waters, patrolled in droves of thousands the shallow waters of the reef to devour the turtle and the schools of *tafa'u uli* and other fish. In quick, alarmed silence the people headed back, but even then the first fierce squall struck them, and some of the frail canoes began to fill at once. "*I matagi! i matagi!*" (head to the wind) a man called out; "head to the wind, or we perish! 'Tis but a puff and it's gone."

But it was more than a puff. The seven canoes, all abreast, were still in shallow water, and the paddlers kept them dead in the teeth of the whistling wind and stinging rain, and called out words of encouragement to one another and to the women.

and children, as another black squall burst upon them and the curling seas began to break. The canoe in which was Atupa's daughter was the largest and best of all the seven, but was much overladen, and on the outrigger grating were four children. These the chief's daughter was endeavouring to shield from the rain by covering them with a mat, when one of them, a little girl, endeavoured to steady herself by holding to one of the thin pieces of grating; it broke, and her arm fell through and struck the water, and in an instant she gave a dull, smothered wail. Palu, the woman, seized her by her hair and pulled the child up sitting, and then shrieked with terror—the girl's arm was gone!

And then in the blackness of night, lightened now by the white, seething, boiling surge, the people saw in the phosphorescent water countless hundreds of the savage terrors of the Tia Kau darting hither and thither amongst the canoes—for the smell of blood had brought them together instantly. Presently a great grey monster tore the paddle from out the hands of the steersman of the canoe wherein were the terrified Palu and the four children, and then, before the man for'ard could bring her head to the wind, she broached to and filled. Like ravening wolves the sharks dashed upon their prey, and ere the people had time to give more than a despairing cry those hideous jaws and gleaming cruel teeth had sealed their fate. Maddened with fear, the rest of the people threw everything out of the six other canoes to lighten them, and as the bundles of mats and baskets of food touched the water the sharks seized and bit,

tore and swallowed. Then, one by one, every paddle was grabbed from the hands of the pullers, and the canoes broached to and filled in that sea of death—all save one, which was carried by the force of the wind away from the rest. In this were the only survivors—two men.

The agony could not have lasted long. "Were I to live as long as he whom the *faisiau* (missionary) tells us lived to be nine hundred and sixty and nine, I shall hear the groans and cries and shrieks of that *po malaia*, that night of evil luck," said one of the two who lived, to the white trader at Nanomea. "Once did I have my paddle fast in the mouth of a little devil, and it drew me backwards, backwards, over the stern till my head touched the water. *Tah!* but I was strong with fear, and held on, for to lose it meant death by the teeth. And Tulua—he who came out alive with me, seized my feet and held on, else had I gone. But look thou at this"—and he pointed to his scarred neck and back and shoulders—"ere I could free my *fae* (paddle) and raise my head I was bitten thus by others. Ah, *Papalagi*, some men are born to wisdom, but most are fools. Had not Atupa been filled with vain fears, he had killed the man who caused him to lose so many of our people."

"So," said the white man, "and wouldst thou have killed the man who brought thee the new faith? Fie!"

"Aye, that would I—in those days when I was *po uli uli*.* But not now, for I am Christian. Yet had

* *Hesthan*, lit., "In the blackest night."

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Atupa killed and buried the stranger, we could have lied and said he died of a sickness when they of his people came to seek him. And then had I now my son Tagipo with me, he who went into the bellies of the sharks at Tia Kau."

Pallou's Taloi.

A MEMORY OF THE PAUMOTU.

I STAYED once at Rotoava—in the Low Archipelago, Eastern Polynesia—while suffering from injuries received in a boat accident one wild night. My host, the Rotoava trader, was a sociable old pirate, whose convivial soul would never let him drink alone. He was by trade a boat-builder, having had, in his early days, a shed at Miller's Point, in Sydney, where he made money and married a wife. But this latter event was poor Tom Oscott's undoing, and in the end he took his chest of tools on board the *Thyrs* and sailed away to Polynesia. Finally, after many years' wandering, he settled down at Rotoava as a trader and boat-builder, and a noted drinker of bottled beer.

The only method by which I could avoid his incessant invitations to "have another" was to get his wife and children to carry me down to his work-shed, a lovely spot surrounded by giant *puka* trees. Here, under the shade, I had my mats spread, and with one of his children sitting at my head to fan away the flies, I lay and watched, through the belt of cocoanuts that lined the beach, the blue rollers

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breaking on the reef and the snow-white boatswain-birds floating high overhead.

Tom was in the bush one morning when his family carried me to the boat-shed. He had gone for a log of seasoned *toa*¹ wood to another village. At noon he returned, and I heard him bawling for me. His little daughter, the fly-brusher, gave an answering yell, and then Tom walked down the path, carrying two bottles of beer; behind him Lucia, his eldest daughter, a monstrous creature of giggles and adipose tissue, with glasses and a plate of crackers; lastly, old Marie, the wife, with a little table.

"By —, you've a lot more sense'n me. It's better lyin' here in the cool than foolin' around in the sun; so I've brought yer suthin' to drink."

"Oh, Tom," I groaned, "I'm sure that beer's bad for me."

The Maker of Boats sat on his bench, and said that he knew of a brewer's carter in Sydney who, at Merriman's pub, on Miller's Point, had had a cask of beer roll over him. Smashed seven ribs, one arm, and one thigh. Doctors gave him up; undertaker's man called on his wife for coffin order; but a sailor chap said he'd pull him through. Got an indiarubber tube and made him suck up as much beer as he could hold; kept it up till all his bones "settled" again, and he recovered. Why shouldn't I—if I only drank enough?

"Hurry up, old dark-skin!"—this to the faded Marie. Uttering merely the word "Hog!" she drew the cork. I had to drink some, and every hour or so

¹ A hard wood much used in boat-building.

Tom would say it was very hot, and open yet another bottle. At last I escaped the beer by nearly dying, and then the kind old fellow hurried away in his boat to Apatiki—another island of the group—and came back with some bottles of claret, bought from the French trader there.

With him came two visitors—a big half-caste of middle age, and his wife, a girl of twenty or thereabout. This was Edward Pallou and his wife Taloi.

I was in the house when Tom returned, enjoying a long-denied smoke. Pallou and his wife entered and greeted me. The man was a fine, well-set-up fellow, wiry and muscular, with deep-set eyes, and bearing across his right cheek a heavy scar. His wife was a dainty little creature with red lips, dazzling teeth, hazel eyes, and long, wavy hair. The first thing I noticed about her was that instead of squatting on a mat in native fashion she sank into a wide chair, and lying back inquired, with a pleasant smile and in perfect English, whether I was feeling any better. She was very fair, even for a Paumotuan half-caste, as I thought she must be, and I said to Pallou, "Why, any one would take your wife to be an English-woman!"

"Not I," said Taloi, with a rippling laugh, as she commenced to make a banana-leaf cigarette; "I am a full-blooded South Sea Islander. I belong to Apatiki, and was born there. Perhaps I have white blood in me. Who knows?—only wise mothers. But when I was twelve years old I was adopted by a gentleman in Papeite, and he sent me to Sydney to school. Do you know Sydney? Well, I was three years with the

Misses —, in — Street. My goodness! I was glad to leave—and so were the Misses — to see me go. They said I was downright wicked, because one day I tore the dress off a girl who said my skin was tallowy, like my name. When I came back to Tahiti my guardian took me to Raiatea, where he had a business, and said I must marry him, the beast."

"Oh, shut up, Taloi!" growled the deep-voiced Pallou, who sat beside me. "What the deuce does this man care about your doings?"

"Shut up yourself, you brute! Can't I talk to any one I like, you turtle-headed fool? Am I not a good wife to you, you great, over-grown savage? Won't you let a poor devil of a woman talk a little? Look here, Tom, do you see that flash jacket he's wearing? Well, I sat up two nights making that—for him to come over with and show off before the Rotoava girls. Go an' 'ic, you —!"

The big half-caste looked at Tom and me. His lips twitched with suppressed passion, and a dangerous gleam shone a moment in his dark eyes.

"Here, I say, Taloi," broke in Tom, good-humouredly, "just go easy a bit with Ted. As for him a-looking at any of the girls here, I knows better—and so do you."

Taloi's laugh, clear as the note of a bird, answered him, and then she said she was sorry, and the lines around Pallou's rigid mouth softened down. It was easy to see that this grim half-white loved, for all her bitter tongue, the bright creature who sat in the big chair.

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Presently Taloi and Lucia went out to bathe, and Pallou remained with me. Tom joined us, and for a while no one spoke. Then the trader, laying down his pipe on the table, drew his seat closer, and commenced, in low tones, a conversation in Tahitian with Pallou. From the earnest manner of old Tom and the sullen gloom that overspread Pallou's face, I could discern that some anxiety possessed them.

At last Tom addressed me, "Look here, —, Ted here is in a mess, and we've just been a talkin' of it over, and he says perhaps you'll do what you can for him."

The half-caste turned his dark eyes on me and looked intently into mine.

"What is it, Tom?"

"Well, you see, it come about this way. You heard this chap's missus—Taloi—a-talkin' about the Frenchman that wanted to marry her. He had chartered a little schooner in Papeite to go to Raiatea. Pallou here was mate, and, o' course he, being from the same part of the group as Taloi, she ups and tells him that the Frenchman wanted to marry her straightaway; and, then, I s'pose, the two gets a bit chummy, and Pallou tells her that if she didn't want the man he'd see as how she wasn't forced agin' her will. So when the vessel gets to Raiatea it fell calm, just about sunset. The Frenchman was in a hurry to get ashore, and tells his skipper to put two men in the boat and some grub, as he meant to pull ashore to his station. So they put the boat over the side, and Frenchy and Taloi and Pallou and two native chaps gets in and pulls for the land.

"They gets inside Uturoa about midnight. 'Jump out,' says the Frenchman to Taloi; but the girl wouldn't, but ties herself up around Pallou and squeals. 'Sakker!' says the Frenchy, and he grabs her by the hair and tries to tear her away. 'Ere, stop that,' says Pallou; 'the girl ain't willin',' an' he pushes Frenchy away. 'Sakker!' again, and Frenchy whips out his pistol and nearly blows Pallou's face off'n him; and then, afore he knows how it was done, Ted sends his knife home into the other fellow's throat. The two native sailors runned away ashore, and Pallou and Taloi takes the oars and pulls out again until they drops. Then a breeze comes along, and they up stick and sails away and gets clear of the group, and brings up, after a lot of sufferin', at Rurutu. And ever since then there's been a French gunboat a-lookin' for Pallou, and he's been hidin' at Apatiki for nigh on a twelvemonth, and has come over here now to see if, when your ship comes back, you can't give him and the missus a passage away somewhere to the westward, out o' the run of that there gunboat, the *Vaudreuil*."

I promised I would "work it" with the captain, and Pallou put out his brawny hand—the hand that "drove it home into Frenchy's throat"—and grasped mine in silence. Then he lifted his jacket and showed me his money-belt, filled.

"I don't want money," I said. "If you have told me the whole story, I would help any man in such a fix as you." And then Taloi, fresh from her bath, came in and sat down on the mat whilst fat Lucia combed and dressed her glossy hair and

placed therein scarlet hisbiscus flowers; and to show her returned good temper, she took from her lips the cigarette she was smoking and offered it to the grim Pallou.

A month later we all three left Rotoava, and Pallou and Taloi went ashore at one of the Hervey Group, where I gave him charge of a station with a small stock of trade, and we sailed away eastward to Pitcairn and Easter Islands.

Pallou did a good business and was well liked, and some seven months afterwards, when we were at Maga Reva, in the Gambier Group, I got a letter from him. "Business goes well," he wrote, "but Taloi is ill; I think she will die. You will find everything square, though, when you come."

But I was never to see that particular island again, as the firm sent another vessel in place of ours to get Pallou's produce. When the captain and the supercargo went ashore, a white trader met them, with a roll of papers in his hand.

"Pallou's stock-list," he said.

"Why, where is he? gone away?"

"No, he's here still; planted alongside his missus."

"Dead!"

"Yes. A few months after he arrived here that pretty little wife of his died. He came to me and asked if I would come and take stock with him. I said he seemed in a bit of a hurry to start stock-taking before the poor thing was buried; but anyhow, I went, and we took stock, and he counted his cash and asked me to lock the place up if anything happened to him. Then we had a drink, and

Pallou's Taloi.

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he bade me good-day and said he was going to sit with Taloi awhile before they took her away. He sent the native women out of the bedroom, and the next minute I heard a shot. He'd done it, right enough. Right through his brain, poor chap. I can tell you he thought a lot of that girl of his. There's the two graves, over there by that *fistau* tree. Here's his stock-list and bag of cash and keys. Would you mind giving me that pair of rubber sea-boots he left?"

A Basket of Bread-fruit.

It was in Steinberger's time. A trader had come up to Apia in his boat from the end of Savaii, the largest of the Samoan Group, and was on his way home again when the falling tide caused him to stop awhile at Mulinu'u Point about two miles from Apia. Here he designed to smoke and talk and drink kava at the great camp with some hospitable native acquaintances during the rising of the water. Soon he was taking his ease on a soft mat, watching the bevy of *ava luma*¹ "chawing" kava.

Now the trader lived at Falealupo, at the extreme westerly end of Savaii; but the Samoans, by reason of its isolation and extremity, have for ages called it by another name—an unprintable one—and so some of the people present began to jest with the trader for living in such a place. He fell in with their humour, and said that if those present would find him for a wife a girl unseared by the breath of scandal he would leave Falealupo for Safune, where he had bought land.

"Malie!" said an old dame, with one eye and white hair, "the *papalagi*² is inspired to speak wisdom to-night; for the Safune grow the sweetest nuts and

¹ The local girls.

² Foreigner.

the biggest taro and bread-fruit; and, lo! here among the kava-chewers is a young maid from Safune—mine own grand-daughter Salomē. And against her name can no one in Samoa laugh in the hollow of his hand," and the old creature, amid laughter and cries of *Ia! e le ma le le matua* (The old woman is without shame), crept over to the trader, and, with one skinny hand on his knee, gazed steadily into his face with her one eye.

The trader looked at the girl—at Salomē. She had, at her grandmother's speech, turned her head aside, and taking the "chaw" of kava-root from her pretty mouth, dissolved into shamefaced tears. The trader was a man of quick perceptions, and he made up his mind to do in earnest what he had said in jest—this because of the tears of Salomē. He quickly whispered to the old woman, "Come to the boat before the full of tide and we will talk."

When the kava was ready for drinking the others present had forgotten all about the old woman and Salomē, who had both crept away unobserved, and an hour or two was passed in merriment, for the trader was a man well liked. Then, when he rose and said *to fa*, they begged him not to attempt to pass down in his boat inside the reef, as he was sure to be fired upon, for how were their people to tell a friend from an enemy in the black night? But he smiled, and said his boat was too heavily laden to face the ocean swell. So they bade him *to fa*, and called out *manuia* as he lifted the door of thatch and went.

• Bless you.

The old woman awaited him, holding the girl by the hand. On the ground lay a basket, strongly tied up. Salomē still wept, but the old woman angrily bade her cease and enter the boat, which the crew had now pushed bow-on to the beach. The old woman lifted the basket and carefully put it on board.

"Be sure," she said to the crew, "not to sit on it, for it is but ripe breadfruit I am taking to my people in Manono."

"Give them here to me," said the trader, and he put the basket in the stern out of the way. The old woman came aft, too, and crouched at his feet and smoked a *sulvi*.¹ The cool land-breeze freshened as the sail was hoisted, and then the crew besought the trader not to run down inside the reef. Bullets, they said, if fired in plenty, always hit something, and the sea was fairly smooth outside the reef. And old Lupetea grasped his hand and muttered in his ear, "For the sake of this my little daughter go outside. See, now, I am old, and to lie when so near death as I am is foolish. Be warned by me and be wise; sail out into the ocean, and at daylight we will be at Salua in Manono. Then thou canst set my feet on the shore—I and the basket. But the girl shall go with thee. Thou canst marry her, if that be to thy mind, in the fashion of the *papalagi*, or take her *fa'a Samoa*.² Thus will I keep faith with thee. If the girl be false, her neck is but little and thy fingers strong."

Now the trader thought in this wise: "This is well for me, for if I get the girl away thus quietly from all her relations I will save much in presents," and his heart rejoiced, for although not mean he was

¹ A cigarette rolled in dried banana leaf.

² Samoan fashion.

A Basket of Bread-fruit.

a careful man. So he steered his boat between the seething surf that boiled and hissed on both sides of the boat-passage.

As the boat sailed past the misty line of cloud-capped Upolu, the trader lifted the girl up beside him and spoke to her. She was not afraid of him, she said, for many had told her he was a good man, and not a *ula vale* (scamp), but she wept because now, save her old grandmother, all her kinsfolk were dead. Even but a day and a half ago her one brother was killed with her cousin. They were strong men, but the bullets were swift, and so they died. And their heads had been shown at Matautu. For that she had grieved and wept and eaten nothing, and the world was cold to her.

"Poor little devil!" said the trader to himself—"hungry." Then he opened a locker and found a tin of sardines. Not a scrap of biscuit. There was plenty of biscuit, though, in the boat, in fifty-pound tins, but on these mats were spread, whereon his crew were sleeping. He was about to arouse them when he remembered the old dame's basket of ripe bread-fruit. He laughed and looked at her. She, too, slept, coiled up at his feet. But first he opened the sardines and placed them beside the girl, and motioned her to steer. Her eyes gleamed like diamonds in the darkness as she answered his glance, and her soft fingers grasped the tiller. Very quickly, then, he felt among the packages aft till he came to the basket.

A quick stroke of his knife cut the cinnet that lashed the sides together. He felt inside. "Only two, after all, but big ones, and no mistake.

A Basket of Bread-fruit.

Wrapped in cloth, too! I wonder—Hell and furies, what's this?"—as his fingers came in contact with something that felt like a human eye. Drawing his hand quickly back, he fumbled in his pockets for a match, and struck it. Breadfruit! No. Two heads with closed eyes, and livid lips blue with the pallor of death, showing their white teeth. And Salomé covered her face and slid down in the bottom of the boat again, and wept afresh for her cousin and brother, and the boat came up in the wind, but no one awoke.

The trader was angry. But after he had tied up the basket again he put the boat on her course once more and called to the girl. She crept close to him and nestled under his overcoat, for the morning air came across the sea from the dew-laden forests and she was chilled. Then she told the story of how her grandma had begged the heads from those of Malietoa's troops who had taken them at Matautu, and then gone to the camp at Mulinu'u in the hope of getting a passage in some boat to Manono, her country, where she would fain bury them. And that night he had come, and old Lupetea had rejoiced and sworn her to secrecy about the heads in the basket. And that also was why Lupetea was afraid for the boat to go down inside the passage, for there were many enemies to be met with, and they would have shot old Lupetea because she was of Manono. That was all. Then she ate the sardines, and, leaning her head against the trader's bosom, fell asleep.

A Basket of Bread-fruit.

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As the first note of the great grey pigeon sounded the dawn, the trader's boat sailed softly up to the Salua beach, and old Lupetea rose, and, bidding the crew good bye, and calling down blessings on the head of the good and clever white man as she rubbed his and the girl's noses against her own, she grasped her Basket of Breadfruit and went ashore. Then the trader, with Salomē by his side, sailed out again into the ocean.

Enderby's Courtship.

THE two ghastly creatures sat facing each other in their wordless misery as the wind died away and the tattered remnants of the sail hung motionless after a last faint flutter. The Thing that sat aft—for surely so grotesquely horrible a vision could not be a Man—pointed with hands like the talons of a bird of prey to the purple outline of the island in the west, and his black, blood-baked lips moved, opened and essayed to speak. The other being that, with bare and skinny arms clasped around its bony knees, sat crouched in the bottom of the boat, leaned forward to listen.

"Ducie Island, Enderby," said the first in a hoarse, rattling whisper; "no one on it; but water is there . . . and plenty of birds and turtle, and a few cocoanuts.

At the word "water" the listener gave a curious gibbering chuckle, unclasped his hands from his knees, and crept further towards the speaker.

"And the current is setting us down to it, wind or no wind. I believe we'll see this pleasure-trip through, after all"—and the black lips parted in a hideous grimace.

The man whom he called Enderby sank his head again upon his knees, and his dulled and bloodshot eyes rested on something that lay at the captain's feet—the figure of a woman enveloped from her shoulders down in a ragged native mat. For some hours past she had lain thus with the grey shadows of coming dissolution hovering about her pallid face, and only the faintest movement of lips and eyelids to show that she still lived.

The black-whiskered man who steered looked down for a second upon the face beneath him with the unconcern for others born of the agony of thirst and despair, and again his gaunt face turned to the land. Yet she was his wife, and not six weeks back he had experienced a cold sort of satisfaction in the possession of so much beauty.

He remembered that day now. Enderby, the passenger from Sydney, and he were walking the poop; his wife was asleep in a deck-chair on the other side. An open book lay in her lap. As the two men passed and re-passed her, the one noted that the other would glance in undisguised and honest admiration at the figure in the chair. And Enderby, who was as open as the day, had said to him, Langton, that the sleeping Mrs. Langton made as beautiful a picture as he had ever seen.

The sail stirred, filled out, and then drooped again. and the two spectres, with the sleeping woman between, still sat with their hungry eyes gazing over toward the land. As the sun sank, the outlines of the verdure-clad summits and beetling cliffs stood forth clearly for a short minute or two, as if to mock

then with hope, and then became enshrouded in the tenebrous night.

Another hour and a faint sigh came from the ragged mat. Enderby, for ever on the watch, had first seen a white hand silhouetted against the blackness of the covering, and knew that she was still alive. And as he was about to call Langton, who lay in the stern-sheets muttering in hideous dreams, he heard the woman's voice calling *him*. With panting breath and trembling limbs he crawled over beside her and gently touched her hand.

"Thank God, you are alive, Mrs. Langton. Shall I wake Captain Langton? We must be nearing the land."

"No, don't. Let him sleep. But I called you, Mr. Enderby, to lift me up. I want to see where the rain is coming from."

Enderby groaned in anguish of spirit. "Rain? God has forgotten us, I——," and then he stopped in shame at betraying his weakness before a woman.

The soft, tender tones again—"Ah, do help me up, please, I can *feel* the rain is near." Then the man, with hot tears of mingled weakness and pity coursing down his cheeks, raised her up.

"Why, there it is, Mr. Enderby—and the land as well! And it's a heavy squall, too," and she pointed to a moving, inky mass that half concealed the black shadow of the island. "Quick, take my mat; one end of it is tight and will hold water."

"Langton, La-a-ngton! Here's a rain squall coming," and Enderby pressed the woman's hand to his lips and kissed it again and again. Then with

eager hands he took the mat from her, and staggering forward to the bows stretched the sound end across and bellied it down. And then the moving mass that was once black, and was now white, swept down upon them and brought them life and joy.

Langton, with an empty beef-tin in his hand, stumbled over his wife's figure, plunged the vessel into the water and drank again and again.

"Curse you, you brute!" shouted Enderby through the wild noise of the hissing rain. "Where is your wife? Are you going to let her lie there without a drink?"

Langton answered not, but drank once more. Then Enderby, with an oath, tore the tin from his hand, filled it and took it to her, holding her up while she drank. And as her eyes looked gratefully into his while he placed her tenderly back in the stern-sheets, the madness of a moment overpowered him, and he kissed her on the lips.

Concerned only with the nectar in the mat, Langton took no regard of Enderby as he opened the little locker, pulled out a coarse dungaree jumper and wrapped it round the thinly-clad and drenched figure of the woman.

She was weeping now, partly from the joy of knowing that she was not to die of the agonies of thirst in an open boat in mid-Pacific and partly because the water had given her strength to remember that Langton had cursed her when he had stumbled over her to get at the water in the mat.

She had married him because of his handsome face and dashing manner for one reason, and because her Scotch father, also a Sydney-Tahitian trading captain, had pointed out to her that Langton had made and was still making money in the island trade. Her ideal of a happy life was to have her husband leave the sea and buy an estate either in Tahiti or Chili. She knew both countries well: the first was her birthplace, and between there and Valparaiso and Sydney her money-grubbing old father had traded for years, always carrying with him his one daughter, whose beauty the old man regarded as a "vara guid thing" and likely to procure him a "weel-to-do mon" for a son-in-law.

Mrs. Langton cared for her husband in a prosaic sort of way, but she knew no more of his inner nature and latent utter selfishness a year after her marriage than she had known a year before. Yet, because of the strain of dark blood in her veins—her mother was a Tahitian half-caste—she felt the mastery of his savage resolution in the face of danger in the thirteen days of horror that had elapsed since the brigantine crashed on an uncharted reef between Pitcairn and Ducie Islands, and the other boat had parted company with them, taking most of the provisions and water. And to hard, callous natures such as Langton's, women yield easily and admire—which is better than loving, for both.

But that savage curse still sounded in her ears, and unconsciously made her think of Enderby, who had always, ever since the eighth day in the boat, given her half his share of water. Little did she know the agony it had cost him the day before, when the water

had given out, to bring her the whole of his allowance. And as she drank, the man's heart had beaten with a dull sense of pity, the while his baser nature called out, "Fool! it is *his* place, not yours, to suffer for her."

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At daylight the boat was close in to the land, and Langton, in his cool, cynical fashion, told his wife and Enderby to finish up the last of the meat and biscuit—for if they capsized getting through into the lagoon, he said, they would never want any more. He had eaten all *he* wanted unknown to the others, and looked with an unmoved face at Enderby, soaking some biscuit in the tin for his wife. Then, with the ragged sail fluttering to the wind, Langton headed the boat through the passage into the glassy waters of the lagoon, and the two tottering men, leading the woman between them, sought the shelter of a thicket scrub, impenetrable to the rays of the sun, and slept.

And then for a week Enderby went and scoured the reefs for food for her.

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One day at noon Enderby awoke. The woman still slept heavily, the first sign of returning strength showing as a faint tinge in the pallor of her cheek. Langton was gone. A sudden chill passed over him—had Langton taken the boat and left them to die on lonely Ducie? With hasty step Enderby hurried to the beach. The boat was there, safe. And at the farther end of the beach he saw Langton, sitting on the sand, eating.

"Selfish brute!" muttered Enderby. "I wonder what he's got?" Just then he saw, close overhead, a

huge ripe pandanus, and, picking up a heavy, flat piece of coral, he tried to ascend the triplicated bole of the tree and hammer off some of the fruit. Langton looked up at him, and showed his white teeth in a mocking smile at the futile effort. Enderby walked over to him, stone in hand. He was not a vindictive man, but he had grown to hate Langton fiercely during the past week for his selfish neglect of his wife. And here was the fellow gorging himself on turtle-eggs, and his tender, delicate wife living on shellfish and pandanus.

"Langton," he said, speaking thickly and pretending not to notice the remainder of the eggs, "the tide is out and we may get a turtle in one of the pools if you come with me. Mrs. Langton needs something better than that infernal pandanus fruit. Her lips are quite sore and bleeding from eating it."

The Inner Nature came out. "Are they? My wife's lips seem to give you a very great deal of concern. She has not said anything to me. And I have an idea——" The look in Enderby's face shamed into silence the slander he was about to utter. Then he added coolly—"But as for going with you after a turtle, thanks, I won't. I've found a nest here and have had a good square feed. If the man-o'-war hawks and boobies hadn't been here before me I'd have got the whole lot." Then he tore the skin off another egg with his teeth.

With a curious guttural voice Enderby asked—"How many eggs were left?"

"Thirty or so—perhaps forty."

"And you have eaten all but those?"—pointing

with savage contempt to five of the round, white balls; "give me those for your wife."

"My dear man, Louise has too much Island blood in her not to be able to do better than I—or you—in a case like ours. And as you have kindly constituted yourself her providore, you had better go and look for a nest yourself."

"You dog!"—and the sharp-edged coral stone crashed into his brain.

When Enderby returned, he found Mrs. Langton sitting up on the creeper-covered mound that overlooked the beach where he had left Langton.

"Come away from here," he said, "into the shade. I have found a few turtle eggs."

They walked back a little and sat down. But for the wild riot in his brain, Enderby would have noted that every vestige of colour had left her face.

"You must be hungry," he thought he was saying to her, and he placed the white objects in her lap.

She turned them slowly over and over in her hands and then dropped them with a shudder. Some were flecked with red.

"For God's sake," the man cried, "tell me what you know!"

"I saw it all," she answered.

"I swear to you, Mrs. Lan——" (the name stuck in his throat) "I never meant it. As God is my witness, I swear it. If we ever escape from here I will give myself up to justice as a murderer."

The woman, with hands spread over her face, shook her head from side to side and sobbed. Then she spoke. "I loved him once. . . . Yet it was for

me . . . and you saved my life over and over again in the boat. All sinners are forgiven, we are told. . . . Why should not you be? . . . and it was for me you did it. And I won't let you give yourself up to justice or any one. I'll say he died in the boat." And then the laughter of hysterics.

When, some months later, the *Josephine*, whaler, of New London, picked them up on her way to Japan, *vid* the Carolines and Pelews, the captain satisfactorily answered the query made by Enderby if he could marry them. He "rayther thought he could. A man who was used ter ketchin' and killin' whales, the powerfulllest creature of Almighty Gawd's creation, was ekal to marryin' a pair of unfortunite human beans in sich a pre-carus situation as theirs."

And, by the irony of fate, the Enderbys (*that* isn't their name) are now living in a group of islands where there's quite a trade done in turtle, and whenever a ship's captain comes to dine with them they never have the local dish—turtle eggs—for dinner. "We see them so often," Enderby explains, "and my wife is quite tired of them."

Long Charley's Good Little Wife.

THERE was the island, only ten miles away, and there it had been for a whole week. Sometimes we had got near enough to see Long Charley's house and the figures of natives walking on the yellow beach; and then the westerly current would take us away to leeward again. But that night a squall came up, and in half an hour we were running down to the land. When the lights on the beach showed up we hove-to until daylight, and then found the surf too heavy to let us land.

We got in close to the reef, and could see that the trader's copra-house was full, for there were also hundreds of bags outside, awaiting our boats. It was clearly worth staying for. The trader, a tall, thin, pyjama-clad man, came down to the water's edge, waved his long arm, and then turned back and sat down on a bag of copra. We went about and passed the village again, and once more the long man came to the water's edge, waved his arm, and retired to his seat.

In the afternoon we saw a native and Charley together among the bags; then the native left him, and, as it was now low tide, the kanaka was able to

walk to the edge of the reef, where he signalled to us. Seeing that he meant to swim off, the skipper went in as close as possible, and backed his fore-yard. Watching his chance for a lull in the yet fierce breakers, the native slid over the reef and swam out to us as only a Line Islander or a Tokelau man can swim.

"How's Charley?" we asked, when the dark man reached the deck.

"Who? Charley? Oh he fine, plenty copra. Tāpā! my bowels are filled with the sea—for one dollar! Here *ariki vaka* (captain) and you *tuhi tuhi* (supercargo)," said the native, removing from his perforated and pendulous ear-lobe a little roll of leaf, "take this letter from the mean one that giveth but a dollar for facing such a *galu* (surf). Hast plenty tobacco on board, friends of my heart? Apā, the surf! Not a canoe crew could the white man get to face it. Is it good twist tobacco, friends, or the flat cakes? Know that I am a man of Nanomea, not one of these dog-eating people here, and a strong swimmer; else the letter had not come."

The supercargo took the note. It was rolled up in many thicknesses of banana-leaf, which had kept it dry:—

"Dear friends,—I have Been waiting for you for near 5 months. I am Chock full of Cobberah and Shark Fins one Ton. I am near Starved Out, No Biscit, no Beef, no flour, not Anything to Eat. for god's Saik send me a case of Gin ashore if you Don't mean to Hang on till the sea goes Down. Not a Woman comes Near me because I am Run out of

Traid so please try also to Send a Peece of Good print as there are some fine Women here from Nukunau and I think I can get one for a wife if I am smart. If you Can't take my Cobberah and mean to Go away send the Squair face¹ for god's saik and something for the Woman. --Your obliged Friend,
CHARLEY."

We parcelled a bottle of gin round with a small coir line, and sent it ashore by the Nanomea man. Charley and a number of natives came to the edge of the reef to lend a hand in landing the bearer of the treasure. Then they all waded back to the beach, headed by the white man in the dirty pyjamas and sodden-looking *fala* hat. Reaching his house, he turned his following away and shut the door.

"I bet a dollar he wouldn't swap billets with the angel Gabriel at this partikler moment," said the profane mate, thoughtfully.

We started weighing and shipping the copra next day. After finishing up, the solemn Charley invited the skipper and supercargo to remain ashore till morning. His great trouble, he told us, was that he had not yet secured a wife, "a reg'lar wife, y'know." He had, unluckily, "lost the run" of the last Mrs. Charley during his absence at another island of the group, and negotiations with various local young women had been broken off owing to his having run out of trade. In the South Seas, as in Australia and elsewhere, to get the girl of your heart is generally a mere matter of trade. There were, he told us with

¹ Square-face = Hollands gin.

a melancholy look, "some fine Nukunau girls here on a visit, but the one I want don't seem to care much about stayin,' unless all this new trade fetches her."

"Who is she?" inquired the skipper.

"Tibākwa's daughter."

"Let's have a look at her," said the skipper, a man of kind impulses, who felt sorry at the intermittency of the Long One's connubial relations.

The tall, scraggy trader shambled to the door and bawled out "Tibākwa, Tibākwa, Tibākwa, O!" three times.

The people, singing in the big *moniep* or town-house, stopped their monotonous droning, and the name of Tibākwa was yelled vociferously throughout the village in true Gilbert Group style. In the Gilberts, if a native in one corner of a house speaks to another in the opposite he bawls loud enough to be heard a mile off.

Tibākwa (The Shark) was a short, squat fellow with his broad back and chest scored and seamed with an intricate and inartistic network of cicatrices made by shark's-teeth swords. His hair, straight, coarse and jet-black, was cut away square from just above his eyebrows to the top of his ears, leaving his fierce countenance in a sort of frame. Each ear-lobe bore a load—one had two or three sticks of tobacco, twined in and about the distended circle of flesh, and the other a clasp-knife and wooden pipe. Stripped to the waist, he showed his muscular outlines to perfection, and he sat down unasked in the bold, self-confident, half-defiant manner natural to the Line Islander.

"Where's Tirau?" asked the trader.

"Here," said the man of wounds, pointing outside, and he called out in a voice like the bellow of a bull—"Tirau O, *nako mai*!" (Come here!)

Tirau came in timidly, clothed only in a *ridi* or girdle, and slunk into a far corner.

The melancholy trader and the father pulled her out, and she dumped herself down in the middle of the room with a muttered "*E puākākā te matan*!" (Bad white man).

"Fine girl, Charley," said the skipper, digging him in the ribs. "Ought to suit you, eh! Make a good little wife."

Negotiations commenced anew. Father willing to part, girl frightened—commenced to cry. The astute Charley brought out some new trade. Tirau's eye here displayed a faint interest. Charley threw her, with the air of a prince, a whole piece of turkey twill, twelve yards—value three dollars, cost about 2s. 3d. Tirau put out a little hand and drew it gingerly toward her. Tibākwa gave us an atrocious wink.

"She's cottoned!" exclaimed Charley.

And thus, without empty and hollow display, were two loving hearts made to beat as one. As a practical proof of the solemnity of the occasion, the bridegroom then and there gave Tirau his bunch of keys, which she carefully tied to a strand of her *ridi*, and, smoking one of the captain's Manillas, she proceeded to bash out the mosquitoes from the nuptial couch with a fan. We assisted her, an hour afterwards, to hoist the sleeping body of Long Charley therein, and telling

her to bathe his head in the morning with cold water we rose to go.

"Good-bye, Tirau!" we said.

"Tiatapi" said the Good Little Wife, as she rolled up an empty square gin bottle in one of Charley's shirts for a pillow, and disposed her graceful figure on the floor mats, beside his bed, to fight mosquitoes until daylight.

"Good-night."

The Methodical Mr. Burr of Majuru.

ONE day Ned Burr, a fellow trader, walked slowly up the path to my station, and with a friendly nod sat down and watched intently as, with native assistance, I set about salting some pork. Ned lived thirty miles from my place, on a little island at the entrance to the lagoon. He was a prosperous man, and only drank under the pressure of the monotony caused by the non-arrival of a ship to buy his produce. He would then close his store, and, aided by a number of friendly male natives, start on a case of gin. But never a woman went into Ned's house, though many visited the store, where Ned bought their produce, paid for it in trade or cash, and sent them off, after treating them on a strictly business basis.

Now the Marshall Island women much resented this. Since Ned's wife had died, ten years previously, the women, backed by the chiefs, had made most decided, but withal diplomatic, assaults upon his celibacy. The old men had respectfully reminded him that his state of singleness was a direct slight

to themselves as leading men. If he refused to marry again he surely would not cast such a reflection upon the personal characters of some two or three hundred young girls as to refuse a few of them the position of honorary wives *pro tem.*, or until he found one whom he might think worthy of higher honours. But the slow-thinking, methodical trader only opened a bottle of gin, gave them fair words and a drink all round, and absolutely declined to open any sort of matrimonial negotiations.

"I'm come to hev some talk with you when you've finished saltin'," he said, as he rose and meditatively prodded a junk of meat with his forefinger.

"Right, old man," I said. "I'll come now," and we went into the big room and sat down.

"Air ye game ter come and see me get married?" he asked, looking away past me, through the open door, to where the surf thundered and tumbled on the outer reef.

"Ned," I said, solemnly, "I know you don't joke, so you must mean it. Of course I will. I'm sure all of us fellows will be delighted to hear you're going to get some nice little *carajz*^{*} to lighten up that big house of yours over there. Who's the girl, Ned?"

"Le-jennabon."

"Whew!" I said, "why, she's the daughter of the biggest chief on Arhnu. I didn't think any white man could get her, even if he gave her people a boat-load of dollars as a wedding-gift."

^{*} An unmarried girl.

"Well, no," said Ned, stroking his beard meditatively, "I suppose I *should* feel a bit set up; but two years ago her people said that, because I stood to them in the matter of some rifles when they had trouble with King Jibberick, I could take her. She was rather young then, any way, but I've been over to Arhnu several times, and I've had spies out, and damn me if I ever could hear a whisper against her. I'm told for sure that her father and uncles would ha'e killed any one that came after her. So I'm a-goin' to take her and chance it."

"Ned," I said, "you know your own affairs and these people better than I do. Yet are you really going to pin your faith on a Marshall Island girl? You are not like any of us traders. You see, we know what to expect sometimes, and our morals are a lot worse than those of the natives. And it doesn't harrow our feelings much if any one of us has to divorce a wife and get another; it only means a lot of new dresses and some guzzling, drinking, and speechifying, and some bother in teaching the new wife how to make bread. But your wife that died was a Manhikian—another kind. They don't breed that sort here in the Marshalls. Think of it twice, Ned, before you marry her."

The girl was a beauty. There are many like her in that far-away cluster of coral atolls. That she was a chief's child it was easy to see; the abject manner in which the commoner natives always behaved themselves in her presence showed their respect for Le-jennabon. Of course we all got very jolly. There were half a dozen of us traders there, and

we were, for a wonder, all on friendly terms. Le-jennabon sat on a fine mat in the big room, and in a sweetly dignified manner received the wedding gifts. One of our number, Charlie de Buis, though in a state of chronic poverty, induced by steadfast adherence to square gin at five dollars a case, made his offerings—a gold locket covering a woman's miniature, a heavy gold ring, and a pair of fat cross-bred Muscovy ducks. The bride accepted them with a smile.

"Who is this?" she asked, looking at the portrait—"your white wife?"

"No," replied the bashful Charles, "another man's. That's why I give it away, curse her. But the ducks I bred myself on Majuru."

A month or two passed. Then, on one Sunday afternoon, about dusk, I saw Ned's whale-boat coming over across the lagoon. I met him on the beach. Trouble was in his face, yet his hard, impassive features were such that only those who knew him well could discover it. Instead of entering the house he silently motioned me to come further along the sand, where we reached an open spot clear of cocoanuts. Ned sat down and filled his pipe. I waited patiently. The wind had died away, and the soft swish and swirl of the tide as the ripples lapped the beach was the only sound that broke upon the silence of the night.

"You were right. But it doesn't matter now. . . ." He laughed softly. "A week ago a canoe-party arrived from Ebon. There were two chiefs. Of

course they came to my house to trade. They had plenty of money. There were about a hundred natives belonging to them. The younger man was chief of Likieb—a flash buck. The first day he saw Le-jennabon he had a lot too much to say to her. I watched him. Next morning my toddy-cutter came and told me that the flash young chief from Likieb had stuck him up and drunk my toddy, and had said something about my wife—you know how they talk in parables when they mean mischief. I would have shot him for the toddy racket, but I was waitin' for a better reason. . . . The old hag who bosses my cook-shed said to me as she passed, 'Go and listen to a song of cunning over there'—pointing to a clump of bread-fruit trees. I walked over—quietly. Le-jennabon and her girls were sitting down on mats. Outside the fence was a lad singing this—in a low voice—

“‘Marriage hides the tricks of lovers,’

Le-jennabon and the girls bent their heads and said nothing. Then the devil's imp commenced again—

“‘Marriage hides the tricks of lovers,’

Some of the girls laughed and whispered to Le-jennabon. She shook her head, and looked around timorously. Plain enough, wasn't it? Presently the boy crept up to the fence, and dropped over a wreath of yellow blossoms. The girls laughed. One of them picked it up, and offered it to Le-jennabon.

She waved it away. Then, again, the cub outside sang softly—

“‘Marriage hides the tricks of lovers,’

and they all laughed again, and Le-jennabon put the wreath on her head, and I saw the brown hide of the boy disappear among the trees.

“I went back to the house. I wanted to make certain she would follow the boy first. After a few minutes some of Le-jennabon’s women came to me, and said they were going to the weather side—it’s narrer across, as you know—to pick flowers. I said all right, to go, as I was going to do something else, so couldn’t come. Then I went to the trade-room and got what I wanted. The old cook-hag showed me the way they had gone, and grinned when she saw what I had slid down inside my pyjamas. I cut round and got to the place. I had a right good idea where it was.

“The girls soon came along the path, and then stopped and talked to Le-jennabon and pointed to a clump of bread-fruit-trees standing in an arrow-root-patch. She seemed frightened—but went. Half-way through she stopped, and then I saw my beauty raise his head from the ground and march over to her. I jest giv’ him time ter enjoy a smile, and then I stepped out and toppled him over. Right through his carcass—them Sharp’s rifles make a hole you could put your fist into.

“The girl dropped too—sheer funk. Old

Lebauro, the cook, slid through the trees and stood over him, and said, 'U, gut! He's a fine-made man,' and gave me her knife; and then I collared Le-jennabon and——"

"For God's sake, Ned, don't tell me you killed her too!"

He shook his head slowly.

"No, I couldn't hurt *her*. But I held her with one hand, she feeling dead and cold, like a wet deck-swab; then the old cook-woman undid my flash man's long hair, and, twining her skinny old claws in it, pulled it taut, while I sawed at the chap's neck with my right hand. The knife was heavy and sharp, and I soon got the job through. Then I gave the thing to Le-jennabon to carry.

"I made her walk in front of me. Every time she dropped the head I slewed her round and made her lift it up again. And the old cook-devil trotted astern o' us. When we came close to the town I says to Le-jennabon:

"'Do you want to live?'

"'Yes,' says she in a voice like a whisper.

"'Then sing,' says I, 'sing loud—

"'Marriage hides the tricks of lovers.'"

And she sang it in a choky kind of quaver.

"There was a great rush o' people ter see the procession. They stood in a line on both sides of the path and stared and said nothin'.

"Presently we comes to where all the Likieb chief's people was quartered. They knew the head

and ran back for their rifles, but my crowd in the village was too strong, and, o' course, sided with me, and took away their guns. Then the crowd gathers round my place, and I makes Le-jennabon hold up the head and sing again—sing that devil's chant.

“‘Listen,’ I says to the people, ‘listen to my wife singing a love-song.’ Then I takes the thing, wet and bloody, and slings it into the middle of the Likieb people, and gave Le-jennabon a shove and sent her inside.”

I was thinking what would be the best thing to say, and could only manage “It’s a bad business, Ned.”

“Bad! That’s where you’re wrong,” and, rising, Ned brushed the sand off the legs of his pyjamas. “It’s just about the luckiest thing as could ha’ happened. Ye see, it’s given Le-jennabon a good idea of what may happen to her if she ain’t mighty correct. An’ it’s riz me a lot in the esteem of the people generally as a man who hez business principles.”

A Truly Great Man.

A MID-PACIFIC SKETCH.

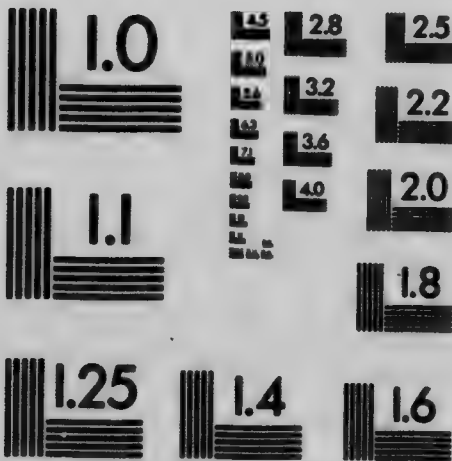
THEN the flag of "Bobby" Towns, of Sydney, was still mighty in the South Seas. The days had not come in which steamers with brass-bound supercargoes, carrying tin boxes and taking orders, like merchants' bagmen, for goods "to arrive," exploited the Ellice, Kingsmill, and Gilbert Groups. Bluff-bowed old wave-punchers like the *Spec*, the *Lady Alicia*, and the *E. K. Bateson* plunged their clumsy hulls into the rolling swell of the mid-Pacific, carrying their "trade" of knives, axes, guns, bad rum, and good tobacco, instead of, as now, white umbrellas, paper boots and shoes, German sewing-machines and fancy prints—"zephyrs," the smartly-dressed supercargo calls them, as he submits a card of patterns to Emilia, the native-teacher's wife, who, as the first Lady in the Land, must have first choice.

In those days the sleek native missionary was an unknown quantity in the Tokelaus and Kingsmills, and the local white trader answered all requirements. He was generally a rough character—a runaway from some Australian or American whaler, or a wandering



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Ishmael who, for reasons of his own, preferred living among the intractable, bawling, and poverty-stricken people of the equatorial Pacific to dreaming away his days in the monotonously happy valleys of the Society and Marquesas groups.

Such a man was Probyn, who dwelt on one of the low atolls of the Ellice Islands. He had landed there one day from a Sydney whaler with a chest of clothes, a musket or two, and a tierce of twist tobacco; with him came a savage-eyed, fierce-looking native wife, over whose shoulders fell long waves of black hair; and a child about five years old.

The second mate of the whaler, who was in charge of the boat, not liking the looks of the natives that swarmed around the new-comer, bade him a hurried farewell, and pushed away to the ship, which lay-to off the passage with her fore-yard aback. Then the clamorous natives pressed more closely around Probyn and his wife, and assailed them with questions.

So far neither of them had spoken. Probyn, a tall, wiry, scanty-haired man, was standing with one foot on the tierce of tobacco and his hands in his pockets. His wife glared defiantly at some two or three score of reddish-brown women who crowded eagerly around her to stare into her face; holding to the sleeve of her dress was the child, paralysed into the silence of fright.

The deafening babble and frantic gesticulations were perfectly explicable to Probyn, and he apprehended no danger. The head-man of the town had not yet

appeared, and until he came this wild license of behaviour would continue. At last the natives became silent and parted to the right and left as Tahori, the head-man, his fat body shining with cocoa-nut oil and carrying an ebony-wood club, stood in front of the white man and eyed him up and down. The scrutiny seemed satisfactory. He stretched out his huge, naked arm and shook Probyn's hand, uttering his one word of Samoan—*Talofa!*¹ and then, in his own dialect, he asked: "What is your name, and what do you want?"

"Sam," replied Probyn. And then, in the Tokelau language, which the wild-eyed people around him fairly understood, "I have come here to live with you and trade for oil"—and he pointed to the tierce of tobacco.

"Where are you from?"

"From the land called Nukunono, in the Tokelau."

"Why come here?"

"Because I killed some one there."

"Good!" grunted the fat man; "there are no twists in your tongue; but why did the boat hasten away so quickly?"

"They were frightened because of the noise. He with the face like a fowl's talked too much"—and he pointed to a long, hatchet-visaged native, who had been especially turbulent and vociferous.

"Ha!" and the fat, bearded face of Tahori turned from the white man to him of whom the white man had spoken—"is it thee, Makoi? And so *thou* madest the strangers hasten away! That was wrong. Only

¹ Lit., "My love to you," the Samoan salutation.

for thee I had gone to the ship and gotten many things. Come here!"

Then he stooped and picked up one of Probyn's muskets, handed it to the white man, and silently indicated the tall native with a nod. The other natives fell back. Niabong, Probyn's wife, set her boy on his feet, put her hand in her bosom and drew out a key, with which she opened the chest. She threw back the lid, fixed her black eyes on Probyn, and waited.

Probyn, holding the musket in his left hand, mused a moment. Then he asked:

"Whose man is he?"

"Mine," said Tahori; "he is from Oaitupu, and my bondman."

"Has he a wife?"

"No; he is poor and works in my *puraka*¹ field."

"Good," said Probyn, and he motioned to his wife. She dived her hand into the chest and handed him a tin of powder, then a bullet, a cap, and some scraps of paper.

Slowly he loaded the musket, and Tahori, seizing the bondman by his arm, led him out to the open, and stood by, club in hand, on the alert.

Probyn knew his reputation depended on the shot. The ball passed through the chest of Makoi. Then four men picked up the body and carried it into a house.

Probyn laid down the musket and motioned again to Niabong. She handed him a hatchet and blunt

¹ A coarse species of taro (*arum sacculatum*) growing on the low-lying atolls of the mid-Pacific.

chisel. Tahori smiled pleasantly, and, drawing the little boy to him, patted his head.

Then, at a sign from him, a woman brought Niabong a shell of sweet toddy. The chief sat cross-legged and watched Probyn opening the tierce of tobacco. Niabong locked the box again and sat upon it.

"Who are you?" said Tahori, still caressing the boy.

"Niabong. But my tongue twists with your talk here. I am of Naura (Pleasant Island). By and by I will understand it."

"True. He is a great man, thy man," said the chief, nodding at Probyn.

"A great man, truly. There is not one thing in the world but he can do it."

"*E moé,*"^{*} said the fat man, approvingly; "I can see it. Look you, he shall be as my brother, and thy child here shall eat of the best in the land."

Probyn came over with his two hands filled with sticks of tobacco. "Bring a basket," he said.

A young native girl slid out from the cocoanuts at Tahori's bidding and stood behind him, holding a basket. Probyn counted out into it two hundred sticks.

"See, Tahori. I am a just man to thee because thou art a just man to me. Here is the price of him that thou gavest to me."

Tahori rose and beckoned to the people to return. "Look at this man. He is a great man. His heart groweth from his loins upwards to his throat.

^{*} True.

Bring food to my house quickly, that he and his wife and child may eat. And to-morrow shall every man cut wood for the house, a house that shall be in length six fathoms, and four in width. Such men as he come from the gods."

The Doctor's Wife.

CONSANGUINITY—FROM A POLYNESIAN STANDPOINT.

"Oho!" said Lāgisiva, the widow, tossing her hair back over her shoulders, as she raised the heavy, fluted tappa mallet in her thick, strong right hand, and dealt the tappa cloth a series of quick strokes—"Oho!" said the dark-faced Lāgisiva, looking up at the White Man, "because I be a woman dost think me a fool? I tell thee I know some of the customs of the *papalagi*—the white foreigners. Much wisdom have ye in many things; but again I tell thee, O friend of my sons, that in some other things the people of thy nation, ay, of all white nations, they be as the beasts of the forest—the wild goat and pig—without reason and without shame. Tah! Has not my eldest son, Tui Fau, whom the white men call Bob, lived for seven years in Sini (Sydney), when he returned from those places by New Guinea, where he was diver? And he has filled my ears with the bad and shameless customs of the *papalagi*. Tah! I say again thy women have not the shame of ours. The heat of desire devoureth chastity even in those of one blood."

"In what do they offend, O my mother?"

"*Aue!* Life is short; and, behold, this piece of *siapo*^{*} is for a wedding present, and I must hurry; but yet put down thy gun and bag and we shall smoke awhile, and thou shalt feel shame while I tell of one of the *papalagi* customs—the marrying of brother and sister."

"Nay, mother," said the White Man, "not brother and sister, but only cousins."

"Tah!" and the big widow spat scornfully on the ground, "those are words, words. It is the same; the same is the blood, the same is the bone. Even in our heathen days we pointed the finger at one who looked with the eye of love on the daughter of his father's brother or sister—for such did we let his blood out upon the sand. And I, old *Lagisiva*, have seen a white man brought to shame through this wickedness."

"Tell me," said the White Man.

"He was a *fema'i* (doctor) and rich, and came here because he desired to see strange places, and was weary of his life in the land of the *papalagi*. So he remained with us and hunted the wild boar with our young men, and became strong and hardy and like unto one of our people. And then, because he was for ever restless, he sailed away once and returned in a small ship, and brought back trade and built a store and a fine house to dwell in. The chief of this town gave him, for friendship, a piece of land over there by the *Vai-ta-milo*, and thus did he become a still greater man; his store was full of rich goods, and he kept

^{*} The *tappa* cloth of the South Seas, made from the bark of the paper mulberry.

many servants, and at night-time his house was as a blaze of fire, for the young men and women would go there and sing and dance, and he had many lovers amongst our young girls.

"I, old Lagisiva, who am now fat and dull, was one. Oho, he was a man of plenty! Did a girl but look out between her eyelashes at a piece of print in the store, lo! it was hers, even though it measured twenty fathoms in length—and print was a dollar a fathom in those days. So every girl—even those from parts far off—cast herself in his way, that he might notice her. And he was generous to all alike—in that alone was wisdom.

"Once or twice every year the ships brought him letters. And he would count the marks on the paper, and tell us that they came from a woman of the *papalagi*—his cousin, as you would call her—whose picture was hung over his table. She was for ever smiling down upon us, and her eyes were his eyes, and if he but smiled then were the two alike—alike as are two children of the same birth. When three years had come and gone a ship brought him a letter, and that night there were many of us at his house, men and women, to talk with the people from the ship. When those had gone away to their sleep, he called to the chief and said :—

"In two days, O my friend, I set out for my land again; but to return, for much do I desire to remain with you always. In six months I shall be here again. And there is one thing I would speak of. I shall bring back a white wife, a woman of my own country whom I have loved for many years."

"Then Tamaali", the chief, who was my father's father and very old, said, 'She shall be my daughter, and welcome,' and many of us young girls said also, 'she shall be welcome'—although we felt sorrowful to lose a man so good and open-handed. And then did the *foma'i* call to the old chief and two others, and they entered the store and lighted lamps, and presently a man went forth into the village and cried aloud, 'Come hither, all people, and listen!' So, many hundreds came, and we all went in and found the floor covered with some of everything that the white man possessed. And the chief spoke and said :

"Behold, my people, this our good friend goeth away to his own country that he may bring back a wife. And because many young unmarried girls will say, 'Why does he leave us—are not we as good to look upon as this other woman?' does he put these presents here on the ground and these words into my mouth—"Out of his love to you, which must be a thing that is past and forgotten, the wife that is coming must not know of some little things—that is *papalagi* custom."

"And then every girl that had a wish took whatever she fancied, and the white man charged us to say naught that would arouse the anger of the wife that was to come. And so he departed.

"One hundred and ten fat hogs killed we and roasted whole for the feast of welcome. I swear it by the Holy Ones of God's Kingdom—one hundred and ten. And yet this white lily of his never smiled—not even on us young girls who danced and sang

before her, only she clung to his arm, and, behold, when we drew close to her we saw it was the woman in the picture—his sister!

"And then one by one all those that had gathered to do him honour went away in shame—shame that he should do this, wed his own sister, and many women said worse of her. But yet the feast—the hogs, and yams, and taro, and fish, and fowls—was brought and placed by his doorstep, but no one spake, and at night-time he was alone with his wife, till he sent for the old chief, and reproached him with bitter words for the coldness of the people, and asked, 'Why is this?'

"And the old man pointed to the picture over the table, and said, 'Is this she—thy wife?'

"'Ay,' said the White Man.

"'Is she not of the same blood as thyself?'

"'Even so,' said he.

"'Then shalt thou live alone in thy shame,' said the old man; and he went away.

"So, for many months, these two lived. He found some to work for him, and some young girls to tend his sister, whom he called his wife, whilst she lay ill with her first child. And the day after it was born, some one whispered, 'He is accursed! the child cries not—it is dumb.' For a week it lived, yet never did it cry, for the curse of wickedness was upon it. Then the white man nursed her tenderly, and took her away to live in Fiji for six months. When they came back it was the same—no one cared to go inside the house, and he cursed us, and said he would bring

men from Tokelau to work for him. We said naught. Then in time another child was born, and it was hideous to look upon, and that also died.

"Now, there was a girl amongst us whose name was Suni, to whom the white woman spoke much, for she was learning our tongue, and Suni, by reason of the white woman's many presents, spoke openly to her, and told her of the village talk. Then the white woman wept, and arose and spoke to the man for a long while. And she came back to Suni and said, 'What thou hast told me was in my own heart three years ago; yet, because it is the custom of my people, I married this man, who is the son of my father's brother. But now I shall go away.' Then the white man came out and beat Suni with a stick. But yet was his sister, whom he called his wife, eaten up with shame, and when a ship came they went away and we saw her not again. For about two years we heard no more of our white man, till he returned and said the woman was dead. And he took Suni for wife, who bore him three children, and then they went away to some other country—I know not where."

"I thank thee many, many times, O friend of my sons. Four children of mine here live in this village, yet not a one of them ever asks me when I smoked last. May God walk with thee for this stick of tobacco."

The Fate of the "Alida."

THE other day, in an Australian paper, I read something that set me thinking of Taplin—of Taplin and his wife, and the fate of the *Alida*. This is what I read:—

"News has reached Tahiti that a steamer had arrived at Toulon with two noted prisoners on board. These men, who are brothers named Rovique, long ago left Tahiti on an island-trading trip, and when the vessel got to sea they murdered the captain, a passenger, the supercargo (Mr. Gibson, of Sydney), and two sailors, and threw their bodies overboard. The movers in the affair were arrested at Ponape, in the Caroline Islands. The vessel belonged to a Tahitian prince, and was called the *Nuroahiti*, but its name had been changed after the tragedy. The accused persons were sent to Manilla. From Manilla they appear now to have been sent on to France."

We were lying inside Funafuti Lagoon, in the Ellice Group. The last cask of oil had been towed off to the brig and placed under hatches, and we were to sail in the morning for our usual cruise among the Gilbert and Kingsmill Islands.

Our captain, a white trader from the shore, and

myself were sitting on deck "yarning" and smoking. We lay about a quarter of a mile from the beach—such a beach, white as the driven snow, and sweeping in a great curve for five long miles to the north and a lesser distance to the south and west.

Right abreast of the brig, nestling like huge birds' nests in the shade of groves of cocoanut and breadfruit trees, were the houses of the principal village in Funafuti.

Presently the skipper picked up his glasses that lay beside him on the skylight, and looked away down to leeward, where the white sails of a schooner beating up to the anchorage were outlined against the line of palms that fringed the beach of Funafala—the westernmost island that forms one of the chain enclosing Funafuti Lagoon.

"It's Taplin's schooner, right enough," he said. "Let us go ashore and give him and his pretty wife a hand to pack up."

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Taplin was the name of the only other white trader on Funafuti besides old Tom Humphreys, our own man. He had been two years on the island, and was trading in opposition to our trader, as agent for a foreign house—our owners were Sydney people—but his firm's unscrupulous method of doing business had disgusted him. So one day he told the supercargo of their vessel that he would trade for them no longer than the exact time he had agreed upon—two years. He had come to Funafuti from the Pelews, and was now awaiting the return of his firm's vessel to take him back there again. Getting into our boat we

were pulled ashore and landed on the beach in front of the trader's house.

"Well, Taplin, here's your schooner at last," said old Tom, as we shook hands and seated ourselves in the comfortable, pleasant-looking room. "I see you're getting ready to go."

Taplin was a man of about thirty or so, with a quiet, impassive face and dark, deep-set eyes that gave to his features a somewhat gloomy look, except when he smiled, which was not often. Men with that curious, far-off look in their eyes are not uncommon among the lonely islands of the wide Pacific. Sometimes it comes to a man with long, long years of wandering to and fro; and you will see it deepen when, by some idle, chance word, you move the memories of a forgotten past—ere he had even dreamed of the existence of the South Sea Islands, and for ever dissevered himself from all links and associations of the outside world.

"Yes," he answered, "I am nearly ready. I saw the schooner at daylight, and knew it was the *Alida*."

"Where do you think of going to, Taplin?" I asked.

"Back to the Carolines. Nerida belongs down that way, you know; and she is fretting to get back again—otherwise I wouldn't leave this island. I've done pretty well here, although the people I trade for are—well, you know what they are."

"Aye," assented old Humphreys, "there isn't one of 'em but what is the two ends and bight of a—scoundrel; and that supercargo with the yaller moustache and womany hands is the worst of the lot."

I wonder if he's aboard this trip? I don't let him inside my house; I've got too many daughters, and they all think him a fine man."

Nerida, Taplin's wife, came out to us from an inner room. She was a native of one of the Pelew Islands, a tall slenderly built girl, with pale, olive skin and big, soft eyes. A flowing gown of yellow muslin—the favourite colour of the Portuguese blooded natives of the Pelews—buttoned high up to her throat, draped her graceful figure. After putting her little hand in ours, and greeting us in the Funafuti dialect, she went over to Taplin, and touching his arm, pointed out the schooner that was now only a mile or so away, and a smile parted her lips, and the star-like eyes glowed and filled with a tender light.

I felt Captain Warren touch my arm as he rose and went outside. I followed.

"L——," said Warren, "can't we do something for Taplin ourselves? Isn't there a station anywhere about Tonga or Wallis Island that would suit him?"

"Would he come, Warren? He—or rather, that pretty wife of his—seems bent upon going away in the schooner to the Carolines."

"Aye," said the skipper, "that's it. If it were any other vessel I wouldn't care." Then suddenly, "That fellow Motley (the supercargo) is a d—— scoundrel—capable of any villainy where a woman is concerned. Did you ever hear about old Raymond's daughter, down at Mangareva?"

I had heard. Suffice it here to say that by means of a forged letter purporting to have been written by

her father—an old English trader in the Gambier Group—Motley had lured the beautiful young half-blood away from a school in San Francisco, and six months afterwards turned her adrift on the streets of Honolulu. Raymond was a lonely man, and passionately attached to his only child; so no one wondered when, reaching California a year after and finding her gone, he shot himself in his room at an hotel.

"I will ask him, anyway," I said; and as we went back into the house the *Alida* shot past our line of vision through the cocoanuts, and brought up inside the brig.

"Taplin," I said, "would you care about taking one of our stations to the eastward? Name any island you fancy, and we will land you there with the pick of our 'trade' room."

"Thank you. I would be only too glad—but I cannot. I have promised Nerida to go back to Babelthouap or somewhere in the Pelews, and Motley has promised to land us at Ponape, in the Carolines. We can get away from there in one of the Dutch firm's vessels."

"I am very sorry, Taplin——" I commenced, when Captain Warren burst in with—"Look here, Taplin, we haven't got much time to talk. Here's the *Alida's* boat coming, with that (blank blank) scoundrel Motley in it. Take my advice. Don't go away in the *Alida*." And then he looked at Nerida and whispered something.

A red spark shone in Taplin's dark eyes, then he pressed Warren's hand.

"I know," he answered, "he's a most infernal

villain—Nerida hates him too. But you see how I am fixed. The *Alida* is our only chance of getting back to the north-west. But he hasn't got old Raymond to deal with in me. Here they are."

Motley came in first, hat and fan in hand. He was a fine-looking man, with blue eyes and an unusually fair skin for an island supercargo, with a long, drooping, yellow moustache. Riedermann, the skipper, who followed, was stout, coarse, red-faced, and brutal.

"How are you, gentlemen?" said Motley, affably, turning from Taplin and his wife and advancing towards us; "Captain Riedermann and I saw the spars of your brig showing up over the cocoanuts yesterday, and therefore knew we should have the pleasure of meeting you."

Warren looked steadily at him for a moment, and then glanced at his outstretched hand.

"The pleasure isn't mutual, blarst you, Mr. Motley," he said coldly, and he put his hand in his pocket.

The supercargo took a step nearer to him with a savage glare in his blue eyes. "What do you mean by this, Captain Warren?"

"Mean," and the imperturbable Warren seated himself on a corner of the table, and gazed stolidly first at the handsome Motley and then at the heavy, vicious features of Riedermann. "Oh, anything you like. Perhaps it's because it's not pleasant to see white men landing at a quiet island like this with revolvers slung to their waists under their pyjamas; looks a bit too much like Bully Hayes' style for me,"

and then his tone of cool banter suddenly changed to that of studied insolence. "I say, Motley, I was talking about you just now to Taplin and Nerida; do you want to know what I was saying? Perhaps I had better tell you. I was talking about Tita Raymond—and yourself."

Motley put his right hand under his pyjama jacket, but Taplin sprang forward, seized his wrist in a grip of iron, and drew him aside.

"The man who draws a pistol in my house, Mr. Motley, does a foolish thing," he said, in quiet, contemptuous tones, as he threw the supercargo's revolver into a corner.

With set teeth and clenched hands Motley flung himself into a chair, unable to speak.

Warren, still seated on the table, swung his foot nonchalantly to and fro and then commenced at Riedermann.

"Why, how's this, Captain Riedermann? don't you back up your supercargo's little quarrels, or have you left your pistol on board? Ah, no, you haven't. I can see it there right enough. Modesty forbids you putting a bullet into a man in the presence of a lady, eh?" Then slewing round again he addressed Motley, "By God, sir, it is well for you that we are in a white man's house and that that man is my friend and took away that pistol from your treacherous hand; if you had fired at me *I would have 'looted' you from one end of Funafuti beach to the other*—and I've a damned good mind to do it now, but won't, as Taplin has to do some business with you."

"That will do Warren," I said. "We don't want

to make a scene in Taplin's house. Let us go away and allow him to finish his business."

Still glaring angrily at Riedermann and Motley, Warren got down slowly from the table. Then we bade Taplin and Nerida good-bye and went aboard.

At daylight we saw Taplin and his wife go off in the *Alida's* boat. They waved their hands to us in farewell as the boat pulled past the brig, and then the schooner hove-up anchor, and with all sail set stood away down to the north-west passage of the lagoon.

A year or so afterward we were on a trading voyage to the islands of the Tubuai Group, and were lying becalmed, in company with a New Bedford whaler. Her skipper came on board the brig, and we started talking of Taplin, whom the whaleship captain knew.

"Didn't you hear?" he said. "The *Alida* never showed up again. 'Turned turtle,' I suppose, somewhere in the islands, like all those slashing overmasted 'Frisco-built' schooners do, sooner or later."

"Poor Taplin," said Warren, "I thought somehow we would never see him again."

Five years had passed. Honest old Warren, fiery-tempered and true-hearted, had long since died of fever in the Solomons, and I was supercargo with a smart young American skipper in the brigantine *Palestine*, when we one day sailed along the weather-side of a tiny little atoll in the Caroline Islands.

The *Palestine* was leaking, and Packerham, tempted by the easy passage into the beautiful lagoon,

decided to run inside and discharge our cargo of copra to get at the leak.

The island had but very few inhabitants—perhaps ten or twelve men and double that number of women and children. No ship, they told us, had ever entered the lagoon but Bully Hayes's brig, and that was nine years before. There was nothing on the island to tempt a trading vessel, and even the sperm whalers as they lumbered lazily past from Strong's Island to Guam would not bother to lower a boat and "dicker" for pearl-shell or turtle.

At the time of Hayes' visit the people were in sore straits, and on the brink of actual starvation, for although there were fish and turtle in plenty, they had not the strength to catch them. A few months before a cyclone had destroyed nearly all the cocoanut trees, and an epidemic followed it, and carried off half of the scanty population.

The jaunty sea-rover—than whom a kinder-hearted man to *natives* never sailed the South Seas—took pity on the survivors, especially the youngest and prettiest girls, and gave them a passage in the famous *Leonsra* to another island where food was plentiful. There they remained for some years, till the inevitable *mal du pays* that is inborn to every Polynesian and Micronesian, became too strong to be resisted; and so, one day, a wandering sperm whaler brought them back again.

But in their absence strangers had come to the island. As the people landed from the boats of the whaleship, two brown men, a woman and a child, came out of one of the houses, and gazed at them.

Then they fled to the farthest end of the island and hid.

Some weeks passed before the returned islanders found out the retreat of the strangers, who were armed with rifles, and called to them to "come out and be friends." They did so, and by some subtle treachery the two men were killed during the night. The woman, who was young and handsome, was spared, and, from what we could learn, had been well treated ever since.

"Where did the strangers come from?" we asked.

That they could not tell us. But the woman had since told them that the ship had anchored in the lagoon because she was leaking badly; and that the captain and crew were trying to stop the leak when she commenced to sink, and they had barely time to save a few things when she sank. In a few days the captain and crew left the island in the boat; and rather than face the dangers of a long voyage in such a small boat, the two natives and the woman elected to remain on the island.

"That's a mighty fishy yarn," said Pakenham to me. "I daresay these fellows have been doing a little cutting-off business. But then I don't know of any missing vessel. We'll go ashore to-morrow and have a look round."

A little after sunset the skipper and I were leaning over the rail watching the figures of the natives as they moved to and fro in the glare of the fires lighted here and there along the beach.

"Halo," said Pakenham, "here's a canoe coming, with only a woman in it. By thunder she's travelling, too, and coming straight for the ship."

A few minutes more and the canoe was alongside. The woman hastily picked up a little girl that was sitting in the bottom, looked up, and called out in English—

"Take my little girl, please."

A native sailor leant over the bulwarks and lifted up the child, and the woman clambered after her. Then seizing the child from the sailor, she flew along the deck and into the cabin.

She was standing facing us as we followed and entered, holding the child tightly to her bosom. The soft light of the cabin lamp fell full upon her features, and we saw that she was very young and seemed wildly excited.

"Who are you?" began I, when she advanced, put out a trembling hand to me, and said, "Don't you know me, Mr. Supercargo? I am Nerida, Taplin's wife." Then she sank on a seat and sobbed violently.

We waited till she regained her composure somewhat, and then I said, "Nerida, where is Taplin?"

"Dead," she said in a voice scarce above a whisper, "only us two are left—I and little Teresa."

Packenham held out his hands to the child. With wondering, timid eyes, she came, and for a moment or two looked doubtfully upwards into the brown, handsome face of the skipper, and then nestled beside him.

For a minute or so the ticking of the cabin clock broke the silence, ere I ventured to ask the one question uppermost in my mind.

"Nerida, how and where did Taplin die?"

"My husband was murdered at sea," she said; and then she covered her face with her hands.

"Don't ask her any more now," said Packenham, pityingly "let her tell us to-morrow."

She raised her face. "Yes, I will tell you to-morrow. You will take me away with you, will you not, gentlemen—for my child's sake?"

"Of course," said the captain, promptly. And he stretched out his honest hand to her.

"She's a wonderful pretty woman," said Packenham, as we walked the poop later on, and he glanced down through the open skylight to where she and the child slept peacefully on the cushioned transoms, "how prettily she speaks English too; do you think she was fond of her husband, or was it merely excitement that made her cry—native women are as prone to be as hysterical as our own when under any violent emotion."

"I can only tell you, Packenham, that when I saw her last, five years ago, she was a graceful girl of eighteen, and as full of happiness as a bird is of song—she looks thirty now; and her face is thin and drawn. But I don't say all for love of Taplin."

"That will all wear off by and by," said the skipper, confidently.

"Yes," I thought, "and she won't be a widow long."

Next morning Nerida had an hour or two among the prints and muslin in the trade-room, and there was something of the old beauty about her when she sat down to breakfast with us. We were to sail

at noon. The leak had been stopped, and Packenham was in high good-humour.

"Nerida," I inquired, unthinkingly, "do you know what became of the *Alida*. She never turned up again."

"Yes," she answered, "she is here, at the bottom of the lagoon. Will you come and look at her."

After breakfast we lowered the dingy, the captain and I pulling. Nerida steered us out to the north end of the lagoon till we reached a spot where the water suddenly deepened. It was, in fact, a deep pool some three or four hundred feet in circumference, closed in by a continuous wall of coral rock, the top of which even at low water, would be perhaps two or more fathoms under the surface.

She held up her hands for us to back water, then she gazed over the side into the water.

"Look," she said, "there lies the *Alida*."

We bent over the side of the boat. The waters of the lagoon were as smooth as glass and as clear. We saw two slender rounded columns that seemed to shoot up in a slanting direction from out the vague blue depths beneath, to within four or five fathoms of the surface of the water. Swarms of gorgeously-hued fish swam and circled in and about the masses of scarlet and golden weed that clothed the columns from their tops downward and swayed gently to and fro as they glided in and out.

A hawk-bill turtle, huge, black, and misshapen, slid out from beneath the dark ledge of the reef and swam slowly across the pool, and then, between the masts, sank to the bottom.

The Fate of the "Alida."

"'Twas six years ago," said Nerida, as we raised our heads.

That night, as the *Palastins* sped noiselessly before the trade wind to the westward she told me, in the old Funafuti tongue, the tragedy of the *Alida*.

"The schooner," she said, "sailed very quickly, for on the fifteenth day out from Funafuti we saw the far-off peaks of Strong's Island. I was glad, for Kusaie is not many days' sail from Ponap—and I hated to be on the ship. The man with the blue eyes filled me with fear when he looked at me; and he and the captain and mate were for ever talking amongst themselves in whispers.

"There were five native sailors on board—two were countrymen of mine, and three were Tafitos."

"One night we were close to a little island called Mokil,* and Taplin and I were awakened by a loud cry on deck; my two countrymen were calling on him to help them. He sprang on deck, pistol in hand, and, behold! the schooner was laid to the wind with the land close to, and the boat alongside, and the three white men were binding my countrymen with ropes, because they would not get into the boat.

"'Help us, O friend!' they called to my husband in their own tongue; 'the white men say that if we go not ashore here at Mokil they will kill us. Help us—for they mean evil to thee and Nerida. He with the yellow moustache wants her for his wife.'

"There were quick fierce words, and then my husband struck Motley on the head with his pistol and

* Natives of the Gilbert Islands.

* Duperrey's Island.

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felled him, and then pointed it at the mate and the captain, and made them untie the men, and called to the two Taito sailors who were in the boat to let her tow astern till morning.

"His face was white with the rage that burned in him, and all that night he walked to and fro and let me sleep on the deck near him.

"*'To-morrow,'* he said, *'I will make this captain land us on Mokil'*—it was for that he would not let the sailors come up from the boat.

"At dawn I slept soundly. Then I awoke with a cry of fear, for I heard a shot, and then a groan, and my husband fell across me, and the blood poured out of his mouth and ran down my arms and neck. I struggled to rise and he tried to draw his pistol, but the man with yellow hair and blue eyes, who stood over him, stabbed him twice in the back. Then the captain and mate seized him by the arms and lifted him up. As his head fell back I saw there was blood streaming from a hole in his chest."

She ceased, and leant her cheek against the face of the little girl, who looked in childish wonder at the tears that streamed down her mother's face.

"They cast him over into the sea with life yet in him—and ere he sank, Motley (that devil with the blue eyes) stood with one foot on the rail and fired another shot, and laughed when he saw the bullet strike. Then he and the other two talked.

"*'Let us finish these Pelew men, ere mischief come of it,'* said Riedermann, the captain.

"But the others dissuaded him. There was time enough, they said, to kill them. And if they killed

them now, there would be but three sailors to work the ship. And Motley looked at me and laughed, and said he, for one, would do no sailor's work yet awhile.

"Then they all trooped below, and took me with them—me, with my husband's blood not yet dried on my hands and bosom. They made me get liquor for them to drink, and they drank and laughed, and Motley put his bloodied hand around my waist and kissed me, and the others laughed still more.

"In a little while Riedermann and the mate were so drunken that no words came from them, and they fell on the cabin floor. Then Motley, who could stand, but staggered as he walked, came and sat beside me and kissed me again, and said he had always loved me; but I pointed to the blood of my husband that stained my skin and clotted my hair together, and besought him to first let me wash it away.

"'Wash it there,' he said, and pointed to his cabin.

"'Nay,' said I, 'see my hair. Let me then go on deck, and I can pour water over my head.'

"But he held my hand tightly as we came up, and my heart died within me; for it was in my mind to spring overboard and follow my husband.

"He called to one of the Tafito men to bring water, but none came; for they, too, were drunken with liquor they had stolen from the hold, where there was plenty in red cases and white cases—gin and brandy.

"But my two countrymen were sober; one of them steered the ship, and the other stood beside him with an axe in his hand, for they feared the Tafito men, who are devils when they drink grog.

"Get some water," said Motley, to Juan—he who held the axe; and, as he brought it, he said, 'How is it, tatooed dog, that thou art so slow to move?' and he struck him in the teeth, and as he struck he fell.

"Ah! that was my time! Ere he could rise I sprang at him, and Juan raised the axe and struck off his right foot; and then Liro, the man who steered, handed me his knife. It was a sharp knife, and I stabbed him, even as he had stabbed my husband, till my arm was tired, and all my hate of him had died away in my heart.

"There was quick work then. My two countrymen went below into the cabin and took Motley's pistol from the table; . . . then I heard two shots.

"Guk! He was a fat, heavy man, that Riedernmann, the captain; the three of us could scarce drag him up on deck and cast him over the side, with the other two.

"Then Juan and Liro talked and said 'Now for these Tafito men; they too must die.' They brought up rifles and went to the fore-part of the schooner where the Tafito men lay in a drunken sleep and shot them dead.

"In two more days we saw land—the island we have left but now, and because that there were no people living there—only empty houses could we see—Juan and Liro sailed the schooner into the lagoon.

"We took such things on shore as we needed, and then Juan and Liro cut away the topmasts and towed the schooner to the deep pool, where they made

holes in her, so that she sank, away out of the sight of men.

"Juan and Liro were kind to me, and when my child was born five months after we landed, they cared for me tenderly, so that I soon became strong and well.

"Only two ships did we ever see, but they passed far-off like clouds upon the sea-rim; and we thought to live and die there by ourselves. Then there came a ship, bringing back the people who had once lived there. They killed Juan and Liro, but let me and the child live. The rest I have told you . . . how is this captain named? . . . He is a handsome man and I like him."

We landed Nerida at Yap, in the Western Carolines. A year afterwards, when I left the *Palestine*, I heard that Pakenham had given up the sea, was trading in the Pelew Group, and was permanently married, and that his wife was the only survivor of the ill-fated *Alida*.

The Chilian Bluejacket.

A TALE OF EASTER ISLAND.

ALONE, in the most solitary part of the Eastern Pacific, midway between the earthquake-shaken littoral of Chili and Peru, and the thousand palm-clad islets of the Low Archipelago, lies an island of the days "when the world was young." By the lithe-limbed, soft-eyed descendants of the forgotten and mysterious race that once quickened the land, this lonely outlier of the isles of the Southern Seas is called in their soft tongue Rapa-nui, or the Great Rapa.

A hundred and seventy years ago Roggewein, on the dawn of an Easter Sunday, discerned through the misty, tropic haze the grey outlines of an island under his lee beam, and sailed down upon it.

He landed, and even as the grim and hardy old navigator gazed upon and wondered at the mysteries of the strange island, so this day do the cunning men of science who, perhaps once in thirty years, go thither in the vain effort to read the secret of an all-but perished race. And they can tell us but vaguely that the stupendous existing evidences of past glories

are of immense and untold age, and show their designers to have been co-eval with the builders of the buried cities of Mexico and Peru; beyond that they can tell us nothing.

Who can solve the problem? What manner of an island king was he who ruled the builders of the great terraced platforms of stones, the carvers of the huge blocks of lava, the hewers-out with rudest tools of the Sphinx-like images of trachyte whose square, massive, and disdainful faces have for unnumbered centuries gazed upwards and outwards over the rolling, sailless swell of the mid-Pacific?

And the people of Rapa-nui of to-day? you may ask. Search the whole Pacific—from Pylstaart, the southern sentinel of the Friendlies, to the one-time buccaneer-haunted, far-away Pelews; thence eastward through the white-beached coral atolls of the Carolines and Marshalls, and southwards to the cloud-capped Marquesas and the sandy stretches of the Paumotu—and you will find no handsomer men or more graceful women than the light-skinned people of Rapa-nui.

Yet are they but the survivors of a race doomed—doomed from the day that Roggewein in his clumsy, high-pooped frigate first saw their land and marvelled at the imperishable relics of a dead greatness. With smiling faces they welcomed him—a stranger from an unknown, outside world, with cutlass at waist and pistol in hand—as a god; he left them a legacy of civilisation—a hideous and cruel disease that swept through the amiable and unsuspecting race as an epidemic, and slew its thousands, and sealed with the

hand of Death and Silence the eager life that had then filled the square houses of lava in many a town from the wave-beaten cliffs of Terano Kau to Ounipu in the west.

Ask of the people now, "Whence came ye? and whose were the hands that fashioned these mighty images and carved upon these stones?" and in their simple manner they will answer, "From Rapa, under the setting sun, came our fathers; and we were then a great people, even as the *oneone*¹ of the beach. . . . Our Great King was it, he whose name is forgotten by us, that caused these temples and cemeteries and terraces to be built; and it was in his time that the forgotten fathers of our fathers carved from out of the stone of the quarries of Terano Kau the great Silent Faces that gaze for ever upward to the sky. . . . Ai-a-ah! . . . But it was long ago. . . . Ah! a great people were we then in those days, and the wild people to the West called us *Te tagata te pito Henua* (the people who live at the end of the world) . . . and we know no more."

And here the knowledge and traditions of a broken people begin and end.

I.

A soft, cool morning in November, 187—. Between Ducie and Pitcairn Islands two American whaleships cruise lazily along to the gentle breath of the south-east trades, when the look-out from both

¹ Sand.

vessels see a third sail bearing down upon them. In a few hours she is close enough to be recognised as one of the luckiest sperm whalers of the fleet—the brig *Pocahontas*, of Martha's Vineyard.

Within a quarter of a mile of the two ships—the *Nassau* and the *Dagget*—the new-comer backs her fore-yard and hauls up her mainsail. A cheer rises from the ships. She wants to *gam*, i.e., to gossip. With eager hands four boats are lowered from the two ships, and the captains and second mates of each are racing for the *Pocahontas*.

The skipper of the brig, after shaking hands with his visitors and making the usual inquiries as to their luck, number of days out from New Bedford, &c., led the way to his cabin, and, calling his Portuguese steward, had liquor and a box of cigars brought out. The captain of the *Pocahontas* was a little, withered-up old man with sharp, deep-set eyes of brightest blue, and had the reputation of possessing the most fiery and excitable temper of any of the captains of the sixty or seventy American whaleships that in those days cruised the Pacific from the west coast of South America to Guam in the Ladrões.

After drinking some of his potent New England rum with his visitors, and having answered all the queries, the master of the *Pocahontas* inquired if they had seen anything of a Chilian man-of-war further to the eastward. No, they had not.

“Then just settle down, gentlemen, for awhile, and I’ll tell you one of the curiousest things that I ever saw or heard of. I’ve logged partiklers of the

whole business, and when I get to Oahu (Honolulu) I mean to nar-rate just all I do know to Father Damon of the Honolulu *Friend*. Thar's nothing like a newspaper fur showin' a man up when he's been up to any onnatural villainy and thinks no one will ever know anything about it. So just listen and take hold."

The two captains nodded, and he told them this.

Ten days previously, when close in to barren and isolated Sala-y-Gomez, the *Pocahontas* had spoken the Chilian corvette *O'Higgins*, bound from Easter Island to Valparaiso. The captain of the corvette entertained the American master courteously, and explained his ship's presence so far to the eastward by stating that the Government had instructed him to call at Easter Island and pick up an Englishman in the Chilian service, who had been sent there to examine and report on the colossal statues and mysterious carvings of that lonely island. The Englishman, as Commander Gallegos said, was a valued servant of the Republic, and had for some years served in its navy as a surgeon on board *El Almirante Cochrane*, the flagship. He had left Valparaiso in the whaleship *Comboy* with the intention of remaining three months on the island. At the end of that time a war vessel was to call and convey him back to Chili. But in less than two months the Republic was in the throes of a deadly struggle with Peru—here the commander of the *O'Higgins* bowed to the American captain, and, pointing to a huge scar that traversed his bronzed face from temple to chin, said, "in which I had the honour to receive this, and promotion"—and nearly two years had elapsed ere the Government had time to

think again of the English scientist and his mission. Peace restored, the *O'Higgins* was ordered to proceed to the island and bring him back; and as the character of the natives was not well known, and it was feared he might have been killed, Commander Gallegos was instructed to execute summary justice upon the people of the island if such was the case.

But, the Chilean officer said, on reaching the island he had found the natives to be very peaceable and inoffensive, and, although much alarmed at the appearance of his armed landing party from the corvette, they had given him a letter from the Englishman, and had satisfied him that Dr. Francis — had remained with them for some twelve months only, and had then left the island in a passing whaleship, and Commander Gallegos, making them suitable presents, bade them good-bye, and steamed away for Valparaiso.

This was all the polite little commander had to say, and, after a farewell glass of wine, his visitor rose to go, when the captain of the corvette casually inquired if the *Pocahontas* was likely to call at the island.

"I ask you," he said in his perfect English, "because of one of my men, a bluejacket, who deserted there. You, señor, may possibly meet with him there. Yet he is of no value, and he is not a sailor, and but a lad. He was very ill most of the time, and this was his first voyage. I took him ashore with me in my boat, as he besought me eagerly to do so, and the little devil ran away and hid, or was hidden by the natives."

"Why didn't you get him back?" asked the captain of the *Pecahontas*.

"Por Dios! that was easy enough, but"—and the commander raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders—"of what use? He was no use to the corvette. Better for him to stay there, and perhaps recover, than to die on board the *O'Higgins* and be thrown to the blue sharks. Possibly, señor, you may find him well, and it may suit you to take him to your good ship and teach him the business of catching the whale. My trade is to show my crew how to fight, and such as he are of no value for that."

Then the two captains bade each other farewell, and in another hour the redoubtable *O'Higgins*, with a black trail of smoke streaming astern, was ten miles away on her course to Valparaiso.

A week after the *Pecahontas* lay becalmed close in to the lee side of Rapa-nui, and within sight of the houses of the principal village. The captain, always ready to get a "green" hand, was thinking of the chances of his securing the Chilian deserter, and decided to lower a boat and try. Taking four men with him, he pulled ashore and landed at the village of Hagaroa.

II.

Some sixty or seventy natives clustered round the boat as she touched the shore. With smiling faces and outstretched hands they surrounded the captain and pressed upon him their simple gifts of ripe

bananas and fish baked in leaves, begging him to first eat a little and then walk with them to Mataverí, their largest village, distant a mile, where preparations were being made to welcome him formally. The skipper, nothing loth, bade his crew not to go too far away in their rambles, and, accompanied by his boat-steerer, was about to set off with the natives, when he remembered the object of his visit, and asked a big, well-made woman, the only native present that could speak English, "Where is the man you hid from the man-of-war?"

There was a dead silence, and for nearly half a minute no one spoke. The keen blue eyes of the American looked from one face to another inquiringly, and then settled on the fat, good-natured features of Varua, the big woman.

Holding her hands, palms upwards, to the captain, she endeavoured to speak, and then, to his astonishment, he saw that her dark eyes were filled with tears. And then, as if moved with some sudden and sorrowful emotion, a number of other women and young girls, murmuring softly in pitying tones, "*E matt! E matt!*"¹ came to his side and held their hands out to him with the same supplicating gesture.

The captain was puzzled. For all his island wanderings and cruises he had no knowledge of any Polynesian dialect, and the tearful muteness of the fat Varua was still unbroken. At last she placed one hand on his sleeve, and, pointing landward with the other, said, in her gentle voice, "Come," and taking

¹ "Dead! Dead!"

his hand in hers, she led the way, the rest of the people following in silence.

For about half a mile they walked behind the captain and his boatsteerer and the woman Varua without uttering a word. Presently Varua stopped and called out the name of "Taku" in a low voice.

A fine, handsome native, partly clothed in European sailor's dress, stepped apart from the others and came to her.

Turning to the captain, she said, "This is Taku the Sailor. He can speak a little English and much Spanish. I tell him now to come with us, for he hath a paper."

Although not understanding the relevancy of her remark, the captain nodded, and then with gentle insistence Varua and the other women urged him on, and they again set out.

A few minutes more, and they were at the foot of one of the massive-stoned and ancient *papaku*, or cemeteries, on the walls of which were a number of huge images carved from trachyte, and representing the trunk of the human body. Some of the figures bore on their heads crowns of red tufa, and the aspect of all was towards the ocean. At the foot of the wall of the *papaku* were a number of prone figures, with hands and arms sculptured in low relief, the outspread fingers clasping the hips.

About a cable length from the wall stood two stone houses—memorials of the olden time—and it was to these that Varua and the two white men, attended now by women only, directed their steps.

The strange, unearthly stillness of the place, the low whispers of the women, the array of colored figures with sphinx-like faces set to the sea, and the unutterable air of sadness that enwrapped the whole scene overawed even the unimaginative mind of the rough whaling captain, and he experienced a curious feeling of relief when his gentle-voiced guide entered through the open doorway the largest of the two houses, and, in a whisper, bade him follow.

A delightful sense of coolness was his first sensation on entering, and then with noiseless step the other women followed and seated themselves on the ground.

Still clasping his hand, Varua led him to the farther end of the house and pointed to a motionless figure that lay on a couch of mats, covered with a large piece of navy-blue calico. At each side of the couch sat a young native girl, and their dark, luminous eyes, shining star-like from out the wealth of black, glossy hair that fell upon their bronzed shoulders, turned wonderingly upon the stranger who had broken in upon their watch.

Motioning the girls aside, Varua released her hold of the white man's hand and drew the cloth from off the figure, and the seaman's pitying glance fell upon the pale, sweet features of a young white girl.

But for the unmistakable pallid hue of death he thought at first that she slept. In the thin, delicate hands, crossed upon her bosom, there was placed, after the manner of those of her faith, a small metal

crucifix. Her hair, silky and jet black, was short like a man's, and the exquisitely-modelled features, which even the coldness of death had not robbed of their beauty, showed the Spanish blood that, but a few hours before, had coursed through her veins.

Slowly the old seaman drew the covering over the still features, and, with an unusual emotion stirring his rude nature, he rose, and, followed by Varua, walked outside and sat upon a broken pillar of lava that lay under the wall of the *papaku*.

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Calling his boatsteerer, he ordered him to return to the beach and go *cū* to the ship with instructions to the mate to have a coffin made as quickly as possible and send it ashore; and then, at a glance from Varua, who smiled a grave approval as she listened to his orders, he followed her and the man she called Taku into the smaller of the two houses.

Round about the inside walls of this ancient dwelling of a forgotten race were placed a number of seamen's chests made of cedar and camphor wood—the *laris* and *pinates* of most Polynesian houses. The gravelled floor was covered with prettily-ornamented mats of *fala* (the screw-palm).

Seating herself, with Taku the Sailor, on the mats, Varua motioned the captain to one of the boxes, and then told him a tale that moved him—rough, fierce, and tyrannical as was his nature—to the deepest pity.

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III.

"It is not yet twenty days since the fighting *pahi ahi* (steamer) came here, and we of Mataveri saw the boat full of armed men land on the beach at Hagaroa. Filled with fear were we; but yet as we had done no wrong we stood on the beach to welcome. And, ere the armed men had left the boat, we knew them to be the *Sipaniola* from Chili—the same as those that came here ten years ago in three ships and seized and bound three hundred and six of our men and carried them away for slaves to the land of the Tae Manu, and of whom none but four ever returned to Rapa-nui. And then we trembled again."

(She spoke of the cruel outrage of 1862, when three Peruvian slave-ships took away over three hundred islanders to perish on the guano-fields of the Chincha Islands.)

"The chief of the ship was a little man, and he called out to us in the tongue of Chili, 'Have no fear,' and took a little gun from out its case of skin that hung by his side and giving it to a man in the boat, stepped over to us and took our hands in his.

"'Is there none among ye that speak my tongue?' he said quickly.

"Now, this man here, Taku the Sailor, speaketh the tongue of Chili, but he feared to tell it, lest they might take him away for a sailor; so he held his lips tight.

"Then I, who for six years dwelt with English people at Tahiti, was pushed forward by those behind

me and made to talk in English; and lo! the little man spoke in your tongue even as quick as he did in that of Chili. And then he told us that he came for Farani.¹

“Now this Farani was a young white man of *Peretania* (England), big and strong. He came to us a year and a half ago. He was rich and had with him chests filled with presents for us of Rapa-nui; and he told us that he came to live awhile among us, and look upon the houses of stone and the Faces of the Silent that gaze out upon the sea. For a year he dwelt with us and became as one of ourselves and we loved him; and then because no ship came he began to weary and be sad. At last a ship—like thine, one that hunts for the whale—came, and Farani called us together, and placed a letter in the hands of the chief at Mataveri and said, ‘If it so be that a ship cometh from Chili give these my words to the captain, and all will be well.’ Then he bade us farewell and was gone.

“All this I said in quick words, and then we gave to the little fighting chief the letter Farani had written. When he had counted the words in the letter he said, ‘*Bueno*, it is well,’ and called to his men, and they brought out many gifts for us from the boat—cloth, and garments for men and women, and two great bags of canvas filled with tobacco. *Ai-a-ah!* many presents he gave us; this because of the good words Farani had set down in the letter. Then the little chief said to me, ‘Let these my men walk where

¹ Frank.

they list, and I will go with thee to Mataveri and talk with the chief.'

"So the sailors came out of the boats carrying their guns and swords in their hands, but the little chief, whose *avagutu* (moustache) stuck out on each side of his face like the wings of a flying-fish when it leaps in terror from the mouth of the hungry bonito, spoke angrily, and they laid their guns and swords back in the boats.

"So the sailors went hither and thither with our young men and girls; and, although at that time I knew it not, she who now is not, was one of them, and walked alone.

"Then I, and Taku the Sailor, and the little sea-chief came to the houses of Mataveri, and he stayed awhile and spoke good words to us. And we, although we fear the men of Chili for the wrong they once did us, were yet glad to listen, for we also are of their faith.

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"As we talked, there came inside the house a young girl named Temeteri, whom, when Farani had been with us for two months, he had taken for wife, and she bore him a son. But from the day that he had sailed away she became sick with grief; and when, after many months, she had told me that Farani had said he would return to her, my heart was heavy; for I know the ways of white men with us women of brown skins. Yet I feared to tell her he lied and would return no more. Now, this girl Temeteri was sought after by a man named Huarani, the son of Heremai, who desired to marry her now that Farani had gone,

and he urged her to question the chief of the fighting ship and ask him if Farani would return.

"So I spoke of Temeteri. He laughed and shook his head, and said, 'Nay, Farani the Englishman will return no more; but yet one so beautiful as she,' and he pointed to Temeteri, 'should have many lovers and know no grief. Let her marry again and forget him; and this is my marriage gift to her,' and he threw a big golden coin upon the mat on which the girl sat.

"She took it in her hand and threw it far out through the doorway with bitter words, and rose and went away to her child.

"Then the little captain went back to the boat and called his men to him, and lo! one was gone. Ah! he was angry, and a great scar that ran down one side of his face grew red with rage. But soon he laughed and said to us, 'See, there be one of my people hidden away from me. Yet he is but a boy and sick; and I care not to stay and search for him. Let him be thy care so that he wanders not away and perishes among the broken lava; he will be in good hands among the people of Rapa-nui.' With that he bade us farewell, and in but a little time the great fighting ship had gone away to the rising sun.

"All that day and the next we searched, but found not him who had hidden away; but in the night of the second day, when it rained heavily, and Taku (who is my brother's son) and I and my two children worked at the making of a *kupega* (net), he whom

we had sought came to the door. And as we looked our hearts were filled with pity, for as he put out his hands to us he staggered and fell to the ground.

"So Taku—who is a man of a good heart—and I lifted him up and carried him to a bed of soft mats, and as I placed my hand on his bosom to see if he was dead, lo! it was soft as a woman's, and I saw that the stranger was a young girl!

"I took from her the wet garments and brought warm clothes of *mamoe* (blankets), and Taku made a great fire, and we rubbed her cold body and her hands and feet till her life came back to her again, and she sat up and ate a little beaten-up taro. When the night and the dawn touched she slept again.

"The sun was high when the white girl awoke, and fear leapt into her eyes when she saw the house filled with people who came to question Taku and me about the stranger. With them came the girl Temeteri, whose head was still filled with foolish thoughts of Farani, her white lover.

"I went to her, put my arm around her, and spoke, but though she smiled and answered in a little voice, I understood her not, for I knew none of the tongue of Chili. But yet she leaned her head against my bosom, and her eyes that were as big and bright as Fetuaho, the star of the morning, looked up into mine and smiled through their tears.

"There was a great buzzing of talk among the women. Some came to her and touched hands and forehead, and said, 'Let thy trembling cease; we of Rapa-nui will be kind to the white girl.'

The Cbilian Bluejacket.

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"And as the people thronged about her and talked, she shook her head and her eyes sought mine and hot tears plashed upon my hand. Then the mother of Temeteri raised her voice and called to Taku the Sailor and said, 'O Taku, thou who knowest her tongue, ask her of Farani, my white son, the husband of my daughter.'

"The young girls in the house laughed scornfully at old Pohère, for some of them had loved Farani, who yet had put them all aside for Temeteri, whose beauty exceeded theirs; and so they hated her and laughed at her mother. Then Taku, being pressed by old Pohère, spoke in the tongue of Chili—but not of Temeteri.

"Ah! She sprang to her feet and talked then, and the flying words chased one another from her lips; and these things told she to Taku:—She had hidden among the broken lava and watched the little captain come back to the boat and bid us farewell. Then when night came she had crept out and gone far over to the great *papaku*, and lay down to hide again, for she feared the fighting ship might return to seek her. And all that day she lay hidden in the lava till night fell upon her again, and hunger drove her to seek the faces of men. In the rain she all but perished, till God brought her feet to this my house.

"Then said Taku the Sailor, 'Why didst thou flee from the ship?'

"The white girl put her hands to her face and wept, and said, 'Bring me my jacket.'

"I gave to her the blue sailor's jacket, and from

inside of it she took a little flat thing and placed it in her bosom.

"Again said old Pohère to Taku, 'O man of slow tongue, ask her of Farani.' So he asked in this wise :

"See, O White Girl, that is Pohère, the mother of Temeteri, who bore a son to the white man that came here to look upon the Silent Faces; and because he came from thy land, and because of the heart of Temeteri which is dried up for love of him does this foolish old woman ask thee if thou hast seen him; for long months ago he left Rapa-nui. In our tongue we call him Farani.'

"The girl looked at Taku the Sailor, and her lips moved, but no words came. Then from her bosom she took the little flat thing and held it to him, but sickness was in her hand so that it trembled, and that which she held fell to the ground. So Taku stooped and picked it up from where it lay on the mat and looked, and his eyes blazed, and he shouted out '*Aue!*' for it was the face of Farani that looked into his! And as he held it up in his hand to the people they, too, shouted in wonder; and then the girl Temeteri cast aside those that stood about her and tore it from his hand and fled.

"Who is she?' said the white girl, in a weak voice to Taku, 'and why hath she robbed me of that which is dear to me?' and Taku was ashamed and turned his face away from her because of two things—his heart was sore for Temeteri, who is a blood relation, and was shamed because her white

lover had deserted her ; and he was full of pity for the white girl's tears. So he said nought.

"The girl raised herself and her hand caught Taku by the arm, and these were her words : 'O man, for the love of Jesu Christ, tell me what was this woman Temeteri to my husband ?'

"Now Taku the Sailor was sore troubled, and felt it hard to hurt her heart, yet he said, 'Was Farani, the Englishman, thy husband ?'

"She wept again, 'He was my husband.'

"'Why left he one as fair as thee ?' said Taku, in wonder.

"She shook her head. 'I know not, except he loved to look upon strange lands ; yet he loved me.'

"'He is a bad man,' said Taku. 'He loved others as well as thee. The girl that fled but now with his picture was wife to him here. He loved her and she bore him a son.'

"The girl's head fell on my shoulder and her eyes closed, and she became as dead, and lo ! in a little while as she strove to speak blood poured from her mouth and ran down over her bosom.

"'It is the hand of Death,' said Taku the Sailor.

"Where she now lies, there died she, at about the hour when the people of Vaihou saw the sails of thy ship.

"We have no priest here, for the good father that was here three years ago is now silent ; yet did Taku and I pray with her. And ere she was silent she said she would set down some words on paper ; so Alrēma, my little daughter, hastened to Mataveri, and the chief sent back some paper and *vai tuhi* (ink) that had

belonged to the good priest. So with weak hand she set down some words, but even as she wrote she rose up and threw out her hands, and called out, 'Francisco, Francisco!' and fell back, and was silent for ever."

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IV.

The captain of the *Pocahontas* dashed the now fast-falling tears from his eyes, and with his rough old heart swelling with pity for the poor wanderer, took from Taku the sheet of paper on which the heart-broken girl's last words were traced.

Ere he could read it a low murmur of voices outside told him his crew had returned. They carried a rude wooden shell; and then with bared heads the captain and boatsteerer entered the house where she lay.

Again the old man raised the piece of navy blue cloth from off the sweet, sad face, and a heavy tear dropped down upon her forehead. Then, aided by the gentle, sympathetic women, his task was soon finished, and two of his crew entered and carried their burden to its grave. Service there was none; only the prayers and tears of the brown women of Rapa-nui.

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Ere he said farewell the captain of the whaleship placed money in the hands of Varua and Taku. They drew back, hurt and mortified. Seeing his mistake, the seaman desired Varua to give the money to the girl Temeteri.

"Nay, sir," said Varua, "she would but give me

bitter words. Even when she who is now silent was not yet cold Temeteri came to the door of the house where she lay and spat twice on the ground, and taking up gravel in her hand cast it at her and cursed her in the name of our old heathen gods. And as for money, we here in Rapa-nui need it not. May Christ protect thee on the sea. Farewell ! ”

The captain of the *Pocahontas* rose and came to the cabin table, and motioning to his guests to fill their glasses, said—

“ ’Tis a real sad story, gentlemen, and if I should ever run across Doctor Francis—I should talk some to him. But see here. Here is my log ; my mate, who is a fancy writist, wrote it at my dictation. I can’t show you the letter that the pore creature herself wrote ; that I ain’t going to show to any one.”

The two captains rose and stood beside him and read the entry in the log of the *Pocahontas*.

“ November 28, 187—.

“ This day I landed at Easter Island, to try and obtain as a ‘ green ’ hand a young Chilian seaman who, the captain of the Chilian corvette *O’ Higgins* informed me, had run away there. On landing I was shown the body of a young girl, whom the natives stated to be the deserter. She had died that morning. Buried her as decently as circumstances would permit. From a letter she wrote on the morning of her death I learned her name to be Señora Teresa T—. Her husband, Dr. Francis T—, was an Englishman in the service of the Chilian Republic. He was sent out

on a scientific mission to the island, and his wife followed him in the *O'Higgins* disguised as a blue-jacket. I should take her to have been about nineteen years of age.

"SPENCE ELDRIDGE, Master.

"MANUAL LEGASPE, 2nd officer.

"Brig *Pocahontas* of Martha's Vineyard, U.S.A."

"Well, that's curious now," said the skipper of the *Nassau*, "why, I knew that man. He left the island in the *King Darius*, of New Bedford, and landed at Ponape in the Caroline Group, whar those underground ruins are at Metalanien Harbour. Guess he wanted to potter around there a bit. But he got inter some sorter trouble among the natives there an' he got shot."

"Aye," said the captain of the *Dagget*, "I remember the affair. I was mate of the *Josephine*, and we were lying at Jakoits Harbour when he was killed, and now I remember the name too. Waal, he wasn't much account anyhow."

Ten years ago a wandering white man stood, with Taku the Sailor, at the base of the wall of the great *papaku*, and the native pointed out the last resting-place of the wanderer. There, under the shadow of the Silent Faces of Stone, the brave and loving heart that dared so much is at peace for ever.

Brantley of Vahitahi.

ONE day a trading vessel lay becalmed off Tatakoto, in the Paumotu Archipelago, and the captain and supercargo, taking a couple of native sailors with them, went ashore at dawn to catch some turtle. The turtle were plentiful and easily caught, and after half a dozen had been put in the boat, the two white men strolled along the white hard beach. The captain, old, grizzled, and grim, seemed to know the place well, and led the way.

The island is very narrow, and as they left the beach and gained the shade of the forest of cocoanuts that grew to the margin of high-water mark they could see, between the tall, stately palms, the placid waters of the lagoon, and a mile or so across, the inner beach of the weather side of the island.

For a quarter of a mile or so the two men walked on till the widest part of the island was reached. Here, under the shadow of some giant puka-trees, the old skipper stopped and sat down on a roughly hewn slab of coral, the remains of one of those *marae* or heathen temples that are to be found anywhere in the islands of Eastern Polynesia.

"I knew this place well once," he said, as he pulled

out his pipe. "I used to come here when I was sailing one of Brander's vessels out of Tahiti. As we have done now we did then—came here for turtle. No natives have lived here for the past forty years. Did you ever hear of Brantley?"

"Yes," answered the supercargo, "but he died long ago, did he not?"

"Aye, he died here, and his wife and sister too. They all lie here in this old *marae*."

And then he told the story of Brantley.

I.

It was six years since Brantley, with his companions in misery, had drifted ashore at lonely Vahitahi in the Paumotu Group, and the kindly-hearted people had gazed with pitying horror upon the dreadful beings that, muttering and gibbering to each other, lay in the bottom of the boat, and pointed with long talon-like fingers to their burnt and bloody thirst-tortured lips.

And now as he sits in the doorway of his thatched house and gazes dreamily out upon the long curve of creamy beach and wind-swayed line of palms that fringe the leeward side of his island home, Brantley passes a brown hand slowly up and down his sun-bronzed cheek and thinks of the past.

He was so full of life—of the very joy of living—that time six years ago when he sailed from Auckland on that fateful voyage in the *Deris*. It was his first

voyage as captain, and the ship was his own, and even now he remembers with a curious time-dulled pang the last words of his only sister—the Doris after whom he had called his new ship—as she had kissed him farewell—"I am so glad, Fred, to hear them call you 'Captain Brantley.'"

And the voyage, the wild feverish desire to make a record passage to 'Frisco and back; the earnest words of poor old white-headed Lutton, the mate, "not to carry on so at night going through the Paumotu Group;" that awful midnight crash when the *Doris* ran hopelessly into the wild boil of roaring surf on Tuanake Reef; the white, despairing faces of five of his men, who, with curses in their eyes upon his folly, were swept out of sight into the awful blackness of the night. And then the days in the boat with the six survivors! Ah, the memory of that will chill his blood to his dying day. Men have had to do that which he and the two who came through alive with him had done.

How long they endured that black agony of suffering he knew not. By common consent none of them ever spoke of it again.

Three months after they had drifted ashore, a passing sperm whaler, cruising through the group, took away the two seamen, and then Brantley, after bidding them a silent farewell, had, with bitter despair gnawing at his heart, turned his face away from the ship and walked back into the palm-shaded village.

"I will never go back again," he had said to himself. And perhaps he was right; for when the *Doris* went

to pieces on Tuanake his hope and fortunes went with her, and save for that other Doris there was no one in the world who cared for him. He was not the man to face the world again with "Why, he lost his first ship," whispered among his acquaintances.

And this is how Brantley, young, handsome, and as smart a seaman (save for that one fatal mistake) as ever trod a deck, became Paranili the *Papalagi*, and was living out his life among the people of solitary Vahitahi.

Ere a year had passed a trading captain bound to the Gambier Islands had given him a small stock of trade goods, and the thought of Doris had been his salvation. Only for her he would have sunk to the life of a mere idle, gin-drinking, and dissolute beach-comber. As it was his steady, straightforward life among the people of the island was a big factor to his business success. And so every year he sent money to Doris by some passing whaler or Tahitan trading schooner, but twice only had he got letters from her; and each time she had said, "Let me come to you, Fred. We are alone in the world, and may never meet again else. Sometimes I awake in the night with a sudden fear. Let me come; my heart is breaking with the loneliness of my life here, so far away from you."

But two years ago he had done that which would keep Doris from ever coming to him, he thought. He had married a young native girl—that is, taken her to wife in the Paumotuan fashion—and surely

Doris, with her old-fashioned notions of right and wrong, would grieve bitterly if she knew it.

Presently he rose, talking to himself as is the wont of those who have lived long apart from all white associations, and sauntered up and down the shady path at the side of his dwelling, thinking of Doris and if he would ever see her again. Then he entered the house.

Seated on the matted floor with her face turned from him was a young native girl—Luita, his wife. She was making a hat from the bleached strands of the pandanus leaf, and as she worked she sang softly to herself in the semi-Tahitan tongue of her people.

Brantley, lazily stretching himself out on a rough mat-covered couch, turned towards her and watched the slender, supple fingers—covered, in Polynesian fashion, with heavy gold rings—as they deftly drew out the snow-white strands of the pandanus. The long, glossy, black waves of hair that fell over her bare back and bosom like a mantle of night hid her face from his view, and the man let his glance rest in contented admiration upon the graceful curves of the youthful figure; then he sighed softly, and again his eyes turned to the wide, sailless expanse of the Pacific, that lay shimmering and sparkling before him under a cloudless sky of blue, and he thought again of Doris.

Steadily the little hands worked in and out among the snowy strands, and now and then, as she came to the *teri*, or refrain, of the old Paumotuan love-song,

her soft liquid tones would blend with the quavering treble of children that played outside.

"Terūnavahori, teeth of pearl,
Kait the sandals for Talaloo's feet,
Sandals of *afa* thick and strong,
Bind them well with thy long black hair."

Suddenly the song ceased, and with a quick movement of her shoulders she threw back the cloud of hair that fell around her arms and bosoms, looked up at Brantley and laughed, and, striking the mat on which she sat with her open palm, said—

"*Ari mai, Paranili.*"

He rose from the couch and stooped beside her, with his hands resting on his knees, and bending his brow in mock criticism, regarded her handiwork intently.

Springing to her feet, hat in hand, and placing her two hands on his now erect shoulders, she looked into his face—darker far than her own—and said with a smile—

"Behold, Paranili, thy *putou* is finished, save for a band of black *pu'ava* which thou shalt give me from the store."

"Mine?" said Brantley, in pretended ignorance. "Why labour so for me? Are there not hats in plenty on Vahitahi?"

"True, O thankless one! but the women of the village say that thou lookest upon me as a fool because I can neither make mats nor do many other things such as becometh a wife. And for this did Merani, my cousin, teach me how to make a wide hat of *fala* to shield thy face from the sun when thou

art out upon the pearling grounds. *Ai-e-sh!* my husband, but thy face and neck and hands are as dark as those of the people of Makatea—they who are forever in their canoes. . . . See, Paranili, bend thy head. *Ai-e-sh!* thou art a tall man, my husband," and she trilled a happy, rippling laugh as she placed the hat on his head.

He placed one hand around the pliant waist and under the mantle of hair and drew her towards him, and then, moved by a sudden emotion, kissed her soft, red lips.

"Luita," he asked, "would it hurt thee if I were to go away?"

The girl drew away from him, and for the first time in two years Brantley saw an angry flush tinge her cheek a dusky red.

"Ah!"—the contemptuous ring in her voice made the man's eyes drop—"thou art like all White Men—was there ever one who was faithful? What other woman is it that thou desirest? Is it Nia of Ahunui—she who, when thy boat lay anchored in the lagoon, swam off at night and abandoned thee for thy love—the shameless Nia!"

The angry light in the black eyes glared fiercely, and the dull red on her cheeks had changed to the livid paleness of passion.

Brantley, holding the rim of the hat over his mouth, laughed secretly, pleased at her first outburst of jealousy. Then his natural manliness asserted itself.

"Come here," he said.

Somewhat sullenly the girl obeyed and edged up beside him with face bent down. He put his hand upon her, and for a few seconds looked at the delicate tracery of tatooing that, on the back, ran in thin blue lines from the finger tips to the wrists.

"What a d——d pity," he muttered to himself; "this infernal tatooing would give the poor devil away anywhere in civilization. Her skin is not as dark as that pretty creole I was so sweet on in Galveston ten years ago . . . well, she's good enough for a broken man like me; but I can't take her away—that's certain."

A heavy tear splashed on his hand, and then he pulled her to him, almost savagely.

"See, Luita. I did but ask to try thee. Have no fear. Thy land is mine for ever."

The girl looked up, and in an instant her face wet with tears, was laid against his breast.

Still caressing the dark head that lay upon his chest, Brantley stooped and whispered something. The little tatooed hand released its clasp of his arm and struck him a playful blow.

"And would that bind thee more to me, and to the ways of these our people of Vahitahi," she asked, with still buried face.

"Aye," answered the ex-captain, slowly, "for I have none but thee in the world to care for."

She turned her face up. "Is there none—not even one woman in far-off Beretania, whose face comes to thee in the darkness?"

Brantley shook his head sadly. Of course, there was Doris, he thought, but he had never spoken of her. Sometimes when the longing to see her again

would come upon him he would have talked of her to his native wife, but he was by nature an uncommunicative man, and the thought of how Doris must feel her loneliness touched him with remorse and made him silent.

Another year passed, and matters had gone well with Brantley. Ten months before he had dropped on one of the best patches of shell in the Paumotu, and to-day, as he sits writing and smoking in the big room of his house, he looks contentedly out through the open door to a little white-painted schooner that lay at anchor on the calm waters of the lagoon. He had just come back from Tahiti with her, and the two thousand dollars he had paid for her was an easy matter for a man who was now making a thousand a month.

"What a stroke of luck!" he writes to Doris. "Had I gone back to Sydney, where would I be now?—a mate, I suppose, on some deep-sea ship, earning £12 or £14 a month. Another year or two like this, and I could go back a made man. Some day, my dear, I may; but I will come back here again. The ways of thy people have become my ways."

He laid down his pen and came to the door and stood thinking awhile and listening to the gentle rustle of the palms as they swayed their lofty plumes to the breezy trade wind.

"Yes," he thought, "I *would* like to go and see Doris, but I can't take Luita, and so it cannot be. How that girl suspects me even now. When I

went to Tahiti to buy the schooner I believe she thought she would never see me again. . . . What a fool I am! Doris is all right, I suppose, although it is a year since I had a letter . . . and I—could any man want more. I don't believe there's a soul on the island but thinks as much of me as Luita herself does; and by G—d she's a pearl—even though she is only a native girl. No, I'll stay here: 'Kapeni Paranili' will always be a big man in the Paumotus, but Fred Brantley would be nobody in Sydney—only a common merchant skipper who had made money in the islands; . . . and perhaps Doris is married."

So he thought and talked to himself, listening the while to the soft symphony of the swaying palm-tops and the subdued murmur of the surf as the rollers crashed on the distant line of reef away to leeward. Of late these fleeting visions of the outside world—that quick, busy world, whose memories, save for those of Doris, were all but dead to him—had become more frequent; but the calm, placid happiness of his existence, and that strange, fatal glamour that for ever enwraps the minds of those who wander in the islands of the sunlit sea—as the old Spanish navigators called Polynesia—had woven its spell too strongly over his nature to be broken. And now, as the murmur of women's voices caused him to turn his head to the shady end of the verandah, the dark, dreamy eyes of Luita, who with her women attendants sat there playing with her child, looked out at him from beneath their long lashes, and told him his captivity was complete.

A week afterwards the people of Vahitahi were clustered on the beach putting supplies of native food in the schooner's boat. That night he was to sail again for the pearling grounds at Matahiva lagoon and would be away three months.

One by one the people bade him adieu, and then stood apart while he said farewell to Luita.

"*E mahina tele*, little one," he was saying, "why such a gloomy face?"

The girl shook her head, and her mouth twitched. "But the *miti*, Paranili—the *miti* of my mother. She is wise in the things that are hidden; for she is one of those who believe in the old gods of Vahitahi. . . . And there are many here of the new *lotu* who yet believe in the old gods. And, see, she has dreamed of this unknown evil to thee twice; and twice have the voices of those who are silent in the *marae* called to me in the night and said, 'He must not go; he must not go.'"

Knowing well how the old superstitious taint ran riot in the imaginative native mind, Brantley did not attempt to reason, but sought to gently disengage her hands from his arm.

She dropped on the sand at his feet and clasped his knees, and a long, wailing note of grief rang out.

"*Aus! aus!* my husband; if it so be that thou dost not heed the voices that call in the night, then, out of thy love for me and our child, let me come also. Then, if evil befall thee, let us perish together."

Brantley raised his hand and pointed to the bowed and weeping figure. Some women came and lifted her up. Then taking the tender face between his

rough hands he bent his head to hers, sprang into the boat and was gone.

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II.

With ten tons of shell snugly stowed in her hold, the little *Tameriki* was heading back for Vahitahi after barely two months' absence. Brantley, as he leant over the rail and watched the swirl and eddy of the creamy phosphorescence that hissed and bubbled under the vessel's stern, felt well satisfied.

It was the hour of dawn; and the native at the tiller sang, as the stars began to pale before the red flush that tinged the sky to windward, a low chant of farewell to Fetuaho, the star of the morning, and then he called to Brantley, who to all his crew was always "Paranili" and never "Kapeni," and pointed with his naked tattooed arm away to leeward, where the low outlines of an island began to show.

"Look, Paranili; that is Tatakoto—the place I have told thee of, where the turtle make the white beach to look black. Would it not be well for us to take home some to Vahitahi?"

"Thou glutton," said Brantley, good-humouredly, "dost thou think I am like to lose a day so that thou and thy friends may fill thy stomachs with turtle meat?"

Rua Manu laughed and showed his white, even teeth. "Nay, Paranili, not for that alone; but it is a great place, that Tatakoto; and thou hast never landed there to look, and Luita hath said that some day she would ask thee to take her there; for though

she was born at Vahitahi her blood is that of the people of Tatakoto, who have long since lain silent in the *marae*."

Brantley had often heard her speak of it, this solitary spot in the wide Pacific, and now, as he looked at the pretty verdure-clad island against the weather shore of which the thundering rollers burst with a muffled roar, he was surprised at its length and extent, and decided to pay it a visit some day.

"Not now, Rua," he said to the steersman, "but it shall be soon. Are there many cocoanuts there?"

"Many? May I perish but the trees are as the sand of the sea, and the nuts lay thick upon the ground. *Ai-t-sh!* and the robber crabs are in thousands, and fat; and the sea-birds eggs."

"Glutton again! Be content. In a little while we and as many of the people of Vahitahi as the schooner will carry will go there and stay for the turtle season."

Three days afterwards the schooner was within fifty miles of his island home, when Brantley was aroused at daylight from his watch below by the cry of "*Te pathi!*" (a ship!) and hastening on deck he saw a large vessel bearing down upon them. In half an hour she was close to, and Brantley recognised her as a brig from Tahiti, that occasionally made a trading voyage to the Paumotus, and whose skipper was a personal friend. Suddenly she hove-to and lowered a boat, which came alongside the schooner, and the white man that steered jumped on deck and held out his hand.

"How are you, Brantley?" and then his eye went quickly over the crew of the schooner, then glanced through the open skylight into the little cabin, and a hopeful, expectant look in his face died away.

"Very well, thank you, Latham. But what is wrong?—you look worried."

"Come on board," said the captain of the brig, quietly, "and I'll tell you."

As Brantley took his seat beside him Latham said, "I have bad news for you, Brantley. Your sister is on board the brig, and I fear she will not live long. She came down to Tahiti in the *Marama* from Auckland, and offered me a good round sum to bring her to you."

"Has she been ill long, Latham?"

Latham looked at him curiously. "Didn't you know, Brantley? She's in a rapid consumption."

For a moment neither man spoke; then Latham gave a short cough.

"I feel it almost as badly as you, Brantley,—but I've got a bit more bad news——"

"Go on, Latham—it can't matter much; my poor sister is everything to me."

"Just so. That's what I told Miss Brantley. Well, it's this—your wife and child are missing——" Latham glanced at him and saw that his hand trembled and then clutched the gunwale of the boat.

"We got into Vahitahi lagoon about ten days ago, and I took Miss Brantley ashore. What happened I don't exactly know, but the next night one of your whaleboats was gone, and Luita and the child were missing. Your sister was in a terrible state of mind,

and offered me a thousand dollars to put to sea. Brantley, old man, I wouldn't take a dollar from her—God bless her—but I did put to sea, and I've searched nigh on twenty islands and scores of reefs and sandbanks——"

"Thank you, Latham," said Brantley, quietly; "when we get on board you can give me further particulars of the islands you've searched."

"You can have my marked chart; I've got a spare one. Brace up, old man; you'll see your sister in a minute. She is terribly cut up over poor Luita—more so than I knew you would. But she was a grand little woman, Brantley, although she was only a native."

"Yes," he answered, in the same slow, dazed manner, "she was a good little girl to me, although she——" The words stuck in his throat.

Latham showed him into the brig's cabin, and then a door opened, and Doris threw herself weeping into his arms.

"Oh, Doris," he whispered, "why did you not tell me you were ill? . . . I would have come to you long ago. I feel a brute——"

She placed her hands on his lips. "Never mind about me, Fred. Has Captain Latham told you about——"

"Yes," he replied; and then suddenly, "Doris, I am going to look for her; I think I know where she tried to reach. It is not far from here. Doris, will you go on back to Vahitahi with Latham and wait for me?"

"Fred," she whispered, "let me come with you."

It will not be long, dear, before I am gone, and it was hard to die away from you . . . that is why I came; and perhaps we may find her."

He kissed her silently, and then in five minutes more they had said farewell to Latham and were on their way to the schooner.

The crew soon knew from him what had happened, and Rua Manu, with his big eyes filled with a wondering pity as he looked at the frail body and white face of Doris lying on the skylight, wore the schooner's head round to the south-west, at a sign from Brantley.

"Aye, Paranili," he said, in his deep, guttural tones, "it is to Tatakoto she hath gone—'tis her mother's land."

That night, as she lay on the skylight with her hand in his, Doris told him all she knew:—

"They were all kind to me when I went ashore to your house, Fred, but Luita looked so fiercely at me. . . . Her eyes frightened me—they had a look of death in them.

"In the morning your little child was taken ill with what they call *tataru*, and I wanted to give it medicine. Luita pushed my hand away and hugged the child to her bosom; and then the other women came and made signs for me to go away. And that night she and the child were missing, and one of your boats was gone."

"Poor Luita," said Brantley, stroking Doris's pale cheek, "she did not know you were my sister. I never told her, Doris."

"She is a very beautiful woman, Fred. They told

me at Tahiti that she was called the pearl of Vahitahi ; and oh ! my dear, if we can but find her, I will make her love me for your sake."

Late in the afternoon of the second day, just as the trade wind began to lose its strength, the schooner was running along the weather-side of Tatakoto, and Rua Manu, from the masthead, called out that he saw the boat lying on the beach inside the lagoon, with her sail set ; and, as landing was not practical on the weather-side, the schooner ran round to the lee.

"We will soon know, Doris. It always rains in these islands at this time of the year . . . so she would not suffer as I once did ; but the sail of the boat is still set, and that makes me think she has never left it. Wait till I come back again, Doris ; you cannot help me."

And Doris, throwing her weak arms round his neck, kissed him with a sob and lay back again to wait.

With Rua Manu and two others of his faithful native crew Brantley walked quickly across the island to the lagoon to where the boat lay. She was not there, and the dark eyes of his sailors met his in a responsive glow of hope—she had not died in the boat !

They turned back into the silent aisles of cocoanut palms, and then Rua Manu called out her name
"Listen," he said.

A voice—a weak, trembling voice—was singing the song of Talaloo.

"Terūnavoheri, bending low,
 Bindeth the sandals on Talaloo's feet ;
 'Hasten, O hasten, lover true,
 O'er the coral, cruel and sharp,
 Over the coral, and sand, and rock,
 Secure thee a turtle for our marriage feast ;
 Is *also* / brave lover mine.'"

"In the old *marae*, Paranili," said Rua Manu, pointing to the ruined temple.

Motioning to the seamen to remain outside, Brantley entered the ruined walls of the old heathen temple. At the far end was a little screen of coconut boughs. He stooped down and went in.

A few minutes passed, and then his hand was thrust out between the branches as a sign for them to follow.

One by one they came and sat beside Brantley, who held the wasted figure of the wanderer in his arms. The sound of his voice had brought back her wavering reason, and she knew them all now. She knew, too, that her brief young life was ebbing fast ; for, as each of the brown men pressed their lips to her hand, tears coursed down their cheeks.

"See, men of Vahitahi, my Englishman hath come to me, a fool that fled from his house . . . because I thought that he lied to me. Teloma was it who first mocked and said, 'Tis his wife from Beretania who hath come to seek him ;' and then other girls laughed and mocked also, and said, '*Ah-he!* Luita, this fair-faced girl who sayeth she is thy husband's sister, *Ah-he!*' . . . and their words and looks stung me. . . . So at night I took my child and swam to the

boat. . . . My child, see, it is here," and she touched a little mound in the soil beside her.

There was a low murmur of sympathy, and then the brown men went outside and covered their faces with their hands, after the manner of their race when death is near, and waited in silence.

Night had fallen on the lonely island, and the far-off muffled boom of the breakers as they dashed on the black ledges of the weather reef would now and then be borne into the darkness of the little hut.

"Put thy face to mine, Paranili, she whispered ;
"I grow cold now."

As the bearded face of the man bent over her, one thin, weak arm rose waveringly in the air and then fell softly round his neck, and Brantley, with his hand upon her bosom, felt that her heart had ceased to beat.

The next day he sailed the schooner into the lagoon, and Doris pressed her lips on the dead forehead of the native girl, ere she was laid to rest.

Something that Doris had said to him as they walked away from her grave filled Brantley's heart with a deadly fear, and as he took her in his arms his voice shook.

"Don't say that, Doris. It cannot be so soon as that. I was never a good man ; but surely God will spare you to me a little longer."

But it came very soon—on the morning of the day that he intended sailing out of the lagoon again. Doris died in his arms on board the schooner, and

Brantley laid her to rest under the shade of a giant puka-tree that overshadowed the stones of the old *marae*.

That night he called Rua Manu into the cabin and asked him if he could beat his way back to Vahitahi in the schooner.

"'Tis an easy matter, Paranili. So that the sky be clear and I can see the stars, then shall I find Vahitahi in three days."

"Good. Then to-morrow take the schooner there, and tell such of the people as desire to be with me to come here, and bring with them all things that are in my house. It is my mind to live here at Tatakoto."

As the schooner slipped through the narrow passage, he stood on the low, sandy point and waved his hand in farewell.

A week later the little vessel dropped her anchor in the lagoon again, and Rua Manu and his crew came ashore to seek him.

They found him lying under the shade of the puka-tree with his revolver in his hand and a bullet-hole in his temple.

THE EBBING OF THE TIDE

"Luliban of the Pool."

A boy and a girl sat by the rocky margin of a deep mountain pool in Ponape in the North Pacific. The girl was weaving a basket from the leaves of a coconut. As she wove she sang the "Song of Luliban," and the boy listened intently.

"'Tis a fine song that thou singest, Niya," said the boy, who came from Metalanien and was a stranger; "and who was Luliban, and Red-Hair the White Man?"

"O Guk!" said Niya, wonderingly, "hast never heard in Metalanien of Luliban, she who dived with one husband and came up with another—in this very pool?"

"What new lie is this thou tellest to the boy because he is a stranger?" said a White Man, who lay resting in the thick grass waiting for the basket to be finished, for the three were going further up the mountain stream to catch crayfish.

"Lie?" said the child; "nay, 'tis no lie. Is not this the Pool of Luliban, and do not we sing the 'Song of Luliban,' and was not Red-Hair the White Man—he that lived in Jakoits and built the big sailing boat for Nanakin, the father of Nanakin, my father, the chief of Jakoits?"

"True, Niya, true," said the White Man, "I did but jest; but tell thou the tale to Sru, so that he may carry it home with him to Metalanien."

Then Niya, daughter of Nanakin, told Sru, the boy from Metalanien, the tale of Luliban of the Pool, and her husband the White Man called "Red-Hair," and her lover, the tattooed beachcomber, called "Harry from Yap."

"It was in the days before the fighting-ship went into Kiti Harbour and burnt the seven whaleships as they lay at anchor¹ that Red-Hair the White Man lived at Jakoits. He was a very strong man, and because that he was cunning and clever at fishing and killing the wild boar and carpentry, his house was full of riches, for Nanakin's heart was towards him always."

"Was it he who killed the three white men at Roān Kiti?" asked the White Man.

"Aye," answered Niya, "he it was. They came in a little ship, and because of bitter words over the price of some tortoise-shell he and the men of Nanakin slew them. And Red-Hair burnt the ship and sank her. And for this was Nanakin's heart bigger than ever to Red-Hair, for out of the ship, before he burnt her, he took many riches—knives, guns and powder, and beads and pieces of silk; and half of all he gave to Nanakin."

"Huh!" said Sru, the boy. "He was a fine man!"

"Now, Harry from Yap and Red-Hair hated one

¹ The *Shenandoah*, in 1866.

"Luliban of the Pool."

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another because of Luliban, whom Nanakin had given to Red-Hair for wife. This man, Harry, lived at Ngatik, the island off the coast, where the turtles breed, and whenever he came to Jakoits he would go to Red-Hair's house and drink grog with him so that they would both lie on the mats drunk together. Sometimes the name of Luliban would come between them, and then they would fight and try to kill each other, but Nanakin's men would always watch and part them in time. And all this was because that Luliban had loved Harry from Yap before she became wife to Red-Hair. The men favoured the husband of Luliban because of Nanakin's friendship to him, and the women liked best Harry from Yap because of his gay songs and his dances, which he had learnt from the people of Yap and Rūk and Hogelu, in the far west; but most of all for his handsome figure and his tattooed skin.

"One day it came about that his grog was all gone, and his spirit was vexed, and Red-Hair beat Luliban, and she planned his death from that day. But Nanakin dissuaded her and said, 'It cannot be done; he is too great a man for me to kill. Be wise and forget his blows.'

"Then Luliban sent a messenger to Ngatik to Harry. He came and brought with him many square bottles of grog, and went in to Red-Hair's house, and they drank and quarrelled as they ever did; but because of what lay in his mind Harry got not drunk, for his eyes were always fixed on the face of Luliban.

"At last, when Red-Hair was fallen down on the mats, Luliban whispered to Harry, and he rose and lay down on a couch that was placed against the cane

sides of the house. When all were asleep, Luliban stole outside and placed her face against the side of the house and called to Harry, who feigned to sleep. And then he and she talked for a long time. Then the white man got up and went to Nanakin, the chief, and talked long with him also.

"Said Nanakin the chief, 'O White Man, thou art full of cunning, and my heart is with thee. Yet what will it profit me if Red-Hair dies?'"

"All that is now his shall be thine," said Harry.

"And what shall I give thee?" said Nanakin.

"Only Luliban," said the White Man with the tattooed body.

"On the morrow, as the day touched the night, the people of Jakoits danced in front of Nanakin's house, and Harry, with flowers in his hair and his body oiled and stained with turmeric, danced also. Now among those who watched him was Luliban, and presently her husband sought her and drove her away, saying: 'Get thee to my house, little beast. What dost thou here watching this fool dance!'"

"Harry but laughed and danced the more, and then Red-Hair gave him foul words. When the dance was ended, Harry went up to Red-Hair and said, 'Get thee home also, thou cutter of sleeping men's throats. I am a better man than thee. There is nothing that thou hast done that I cannot do.'"

"Then Nanakin, whose mouth was ready with words put therein by Luliban, said, 'Nay, Harry, thou dost but boast. Thou canst not walk under the water in the Deep Pool with a heavy stone on thy shoulder—as Red-Hair has done.'"

"'Bah!' said Harry. 'What he can do, that I can do.'

"Now, for a man to go in at one end of this pool here"—and Niya nodded her head to the waters at her feet—"and walk along the bottom and come out at the farther end is no great task, and as for carrying a heavy stone, that doth but make the task easier; but in those days there were devils who lived in a cave that is beneath where we now sit, and none of our people ever bathed here, for fear they would be seized and dragged down. But yet had Red-Hair one day put a stone upon his shoulder, and carried it under the water from one end of the pool to another—this to show the people that he feared no devils. But of the cave that can be gained by diving under the wall of rock he knew nothing—only to a few was it known.

"'Show this boaster his folly,' said Nanakin to Red-Hair, who was chewing his beard with wrath. And so it was agreed upon the morrow that the two white men should walk each with a stone upon his shoulder, in at one end of the deep pool and come out of the other, and Harry should prove his boast, that in all things he was equal to Red-Hair.

"When Red-Hair went back to his house Luliban was gone, and some said she had fled to the mountains, and he reproached Nanakin, saying: 'Thy daughter hath fled to Ngatik to the house of Harry. I will have her life and his for this.' But Nanakin smoothed his face and said: 'Nay, not so; but first put this boaster to shame before the people, and he shall die, and Luliban be found.'

"Now, Luliban was hid in another village, and

when the time drew near for the trial at the pool she went there before the people. In her hand she carried a sharp *taki* (tomahawk) and a long piece of strong cinnet with a looped end. She dived in and clambered out again underneath and waited. The cave is not dark, for there are many fissures in the top through which light comes when the sun is high.

"The people gathered round, and laughed and talked as the two white men stripped naked, save for narrow girdles of leaves round their loins. The skin of Red-Hair was as white as sand that lies always in the sun; that of Harry was brown, and covered from his neck to his feet with strange tattooing, more beautiful than that of the men of Ponape.

"They looked at each other with blood in their eyes, and the long, yellow teeth of Red-Hair ground together, but no words passed between them till Red-Hair, poising a great stone on his shoulder, called out to Harry: 'Follow me, O boastful stealer of my wife, and drown thy blue carcass.'

"Then he walked in, and Harry, also with a heavy stone, followed him. Ere one could count a score those that watched could not see Harry, because of the depth of the water and the darkness of his skin. But the white skin of Red-Hair gleamed like the belly of a shark when it turneth—then it disappeared.

"When they were half-way through a stone fell through a fissure of the cave, and Luliban, who watched for the signal, dived outwards with the line of cinnet, and came behind Red-Hair and put the noose over his left foot, and Harry, who followed close, cast the stone he carried away and raised his hand and stabbed him in the belly as he turned, and then, with

Luliban and he dragging tight the line of cinnet, they shot up from beneath the water into the cave and pulled Red-Hair after them.

"The people had gathered at the farther end of the pool to see the two men come up; and when they came not they wondered, and some one said: 'The devils have seized them!'

"Then Nanakin, who alone remained on the top of the rocks, called out, 'Alas for the white men! I can see bubbles, and the water is bloody,' and he beat his head on the rocks and made great grief and called out to the devils in the cave, 'Spare me my white men, O devils of the cave, spare me my good white men. But if one must die let it be him that hath offended.'

"Ah! he was a cunning man, was Nanakin, the father of Nanakin my father.

"The men and the women and children ran up again from the end of the pool; for, although they were greatly afraid, they durst not leave their chief by himself to beat out his head upon the stones. So they clustered round him and wailed also with him. And Nanakin raised his voice again and again and called out to the devils of the pool to spare him one white man; and the people called out with him. Yet none of them dared look upon the water of the pool; only Nanakin turned his eyes that way.

"At last the chief said, 'Ho, what is that?' and he pointed to the water, and they saw bubbles again rise up and break the surface of the water. 'Now shall I know if my white men are dead.'

"And, as they looked, behold there shot up from

the water a yellow gourd, and the men shouted, some in wonder and more in fear. And Nanakin leaned over the edge of the rock and stretched out his hand and drew the gourd to him. Then he took it in his hand, and lo! there was tied to the neck a piece of plaited cinnet, which ran deep down into the water under the rock.

"Again Nanakin called out to his men who stood crouched up behind him. 'What shall I do with this? shall I pull it up?'"

"And then—so the people said—there came a voice from the bowels of the earth, which said, 'Pull!'"

"So they drew in the line, and as they drew it became heavy, and then something came up with a splash, and those that held the line looked over, and lo! there was the head of Red-Hair, wet and bloody, tied to the end of it by the ear.

"The head was laid upon the rock, and then the people would have turned and fled, but that Nanakin and two of his priests said there was now no fear as the cave devils were angry alone with Red-Hair, who had twice braved them.

"Then the two priests and Nanakin leant over the wall of rocks and called out again for the life of Harry to be spared, and as they called, he shot out from underneath and held out his hands; and they pulled him in.

"'Let us away from here quickly,' was all he said. 'I thank thee, O chief, for thy prayers; else had the devils of the pool taken off my head as they have taken off that of Red-Hair, and devoured my body as they have devoured his.'

"Luliban of the Pool."

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"Then the people picked him up, for he was weak, and every one that was there left the pool in fear and trembling, except Nanakin and the two priests, who laughed inwardly.

"When all was quiet, Luliban, too, came up from under the water and dried her body, and oiled and scented her hair from a flask that she had hidden in the bushes, and went back to Red-Hair's house, and, with downcast face but a merry heart, asked her women to plead with her husband not to beat her for running away. Then they told her of the doings at the pool.

"When ten days were gone by for mourning, Luliban became wife to 'Harry from Yap,' and he took her with him to Ngatik, and the favour of Nanakin that was once Red-Hair's became his, and he prospered. And for long, long years no one knew how it was that Red-Hair lost his head till Luliban told it."

"*Huh!*" said Sru, the boy, admiringly. "He was a Fine Man, that Red-Hair; but the white man with the tattooed skin was a Better."

Ninia.

AWAY out upon the wide Northern Pacific there is a group of three little islands. They are so very, very small that you need not seek to discover them on the map of the Pacific Ocean ; but if any of you have a chart of the North or West Pacific, then you would easily be able to find them. Run your eye up north, away past the Equator, in the direction of China, and you will see, to the north of New Guinea, a large cluster of islands named the "Caroline Islands," some of which are named, but most are not—only tiny dots no bigger than a pin's head serve to mark their position. Perhaps, however—if you get a German chart—you may see one of the largest of the small dots marked "Pingelap," and Pingelap is the name of the largest of the three little islands of my story ; the others are called Tugulu and Takai.

Now, although Pingelap and Tugulu and Takai are so close together that at low tide one may walk across the coral reef that encircles the whole group from one island to another, yet are they lonely spots, for there is no other island nearer than Mokil, which is ninety miles away.

But yet, although the three islands are so small, a great number of natives live upon them—between four and five hundred. There is only one village, which is on

Pingelap, and here all the people lived. The island itself is not more than two miles in length, and in no place is it more than a quarter of a mile in width; and Tugulu and Takai are still smaller. And from one end to the other the islands are covered with a dense verdure of cocoanut palms, with scarcely any other tree amongst them, so that when seen from the ship two or three miles away, they look exactly like a belt of emerald surrounding a lake of silver, for in their centre is a beautiful lagoon surrounded on three sides by the land, and on the west protected from the sweeping ocean rollers by a double line of coral reef stretching from little Takai to the south end of Pingelap.

There are hundreds of beautiful islands in the Pacific, but not any one of them can excel in beauty lonely little Pingelap. There are two reefs—an outer and an inner. Against the outer or ocean reef huge seas for ever dash unceasingly on the windward side of the island, and sometimes, in bad weather, will sweep right over the coral and pour through the shallow channel between Tugulu and Pingelap; and then the calm, placid waters of the lagoon will be fretted and disturbed until fine weather comes again. But bad weather is a rare event in those seas, and usually the lagoon of Pingelap is as smooth as a sheet of glass. And all day long you may see children paddling about in canoes, crossing from one shining beach to another, and singing as they paddle, for they are a merry-hearted race, the people of these three islands, and love to sing and dance, and sit out in front of their houses on moonlight nights and listen to tales told by the old men of the days when their islands were reddened with blood. For until fifteen years before, the people of Pingelap

and Tugulu were at bitter enmity, and fought with and slaughtered each other to their heart's delight. And perhaps there would have soon been none left to tell the tale, but that one day an American whaleship, called the *Cohasset*, touched there to buy turtle from Sralik, the chief of Pingelap, and Sralik besought the captain to give him muskets and powder and ball to fight the Tugulans with.

So the captain gave him five muskets and plenty of powder and bullets, and then said—

"See, Sralik ; I will give you a white man too, to show you how to shoot your enemies."

And then he laughed, and calling out to a man named Harry, he told him to clear out of the ship and go and live ashore and be a king, as he was not worth his salt as a boatsteerer.

And so this Harry Devine, who was a drunken, good-for-nothing, quarrelsome young American, came ashore with Sralik, and next day he loaded the five muskets and, with Sralik, led the Pingelap people over to Tugulu. There was a great fight, and as fast as Sralik loaded a musket, Harry fired it and killed a man. At last, when nearly thirty had been shot, the Tugulu people called for quarter.

"Get thee together on Takai," called out Sralik, "and then will we talk of peace."

Now Takai is such a tiny little spot, that Sralik knew he would have them at his mercy, for not one of them had a musket.

As soon as the last of the Tugulu people had crossed the shallow channel that divides Tugulu from Takai, the cunning Sralik with his warriors lined the beach and then called to the Tugulans—

"This land is too small for so many."

And then Harry, once the boatsteerer and now the beachcomber, fired his muskets into the thick, surging mass of humanity on the little islet, and every shot told. Many of them, throwing aside their spears and clubs, sprang into the water and tried to swim over to Pingelap across the lagoon. But Sralik's men pursued them in canoes and clubbed and speared them as they swam; and some that escaped death by club or spear, were rent in pieces by the sharks which, as soon as they smelt the blood of the dead and dying men that sank in the quiet waters of the lagoon, swarmed in through a passage in the western reef. By and by the last of those who took to the water were killed, and only some eighty or ninety men and many more women and children were left on Takai, and the five muskets became so hot and foul that Harry could murder no longer, and his arm was tired out with slaughter.

All that night Sralik's warriors watched to see that none escaped, and at dawn the hideous massacre began again, and club, spear, and musket did their fell work till only the women and children were left. These were spared. Among them was Ninia, the wife of Sikra, the chief of Tugulu. And because she was young and fairer than any of the others, the white man asked her of Sralik for his wife. Sralik laughed.

"Take her, O clever white man—her and as many more as thou carest for slaves. Only thou and I shall rule here now in this my island."

So Harry took her and married her according to native custom, and Ninia was his one wife for nearly fifteen years, when one day he was quietly murdered as

he lay asleep in his house with his wife and two children; and although Sralik wept loudly and cut his great chest with a shark's teeth dagger, and offered sacrifices of turtle flesh to the white man's *jelin*, Ninia his wife and many other people knew that it was by Sralik's orders that Harry had been killed, for they had quarrelled over the possession of a whaleboat which Harry had bought from a passing ship, and which he refused to either sell or give to Sralik.

However, Sralik was not unkind to Ninia, and gave her much of her dead husband's property, and told her that he would give her for an inheritance for her two daughters the little islet—Takai.

And there in the year 1870 Ninia the widow, and Ninia her eldest daughter (for on Pingelap names of the first-born are hereditary) and Tarita, the youngest, went to live. With them went another girl, a grand-daughter of the savage old Sralik. Her name was Ruvani. She was about eleven years of age, and as pretty as a gazelle, and because of her great friendship for Ninia—who was two years older than she—she had wept when she saw the mother and daughters set out for Takai.

Fierce-hearted Sralik coming to the doorway of his thatched hut heard the sound of weeping, and looking out he saw Ruvani sitting under the shade of some banana trees with her face hidden in her pretty brown hands.

When he learned the cause of her grief his heart softened, and drawing his little grand-daughter to him, patted her head, and said—

“Nay, weep not, little bird. Thou too shalt go to Takai; and see, because of thee my heart shall open

wide to Ninia and her daughters, and I will give her four slaves—two men and two women—who shall toil for you all. And when thou art tired of living at Takai, then thou and thy two playmates shall come over here to me and fill my house with the light of thy eyes.

So that is how Ninia, the widow of the wandering white man, and her two daughters and their friend came to live at the little islet called Takai.

II.

The months went by and Ruvani, the chief's granddaughter, still lived with her friends, for she was too happy to leave them. Sometimes, though, on bright moonlight nights, the three girls would paddle across to the big village and gather with the rest of the village girls in front of the chief's house, and dance and sing and play the game called *s'jiajia*; and then, perhaps, instead of going home across the lagoon in the canoe, they would walk around on the inner beaches of Pingelap and Tugulu. And long ere they came to the house they could see the faint glimmer of the fire within, beside which Ninia the widow slept awaiting their return.

Stealing softly in, the girls would lie down together on a soft white mat embroidered with parrots' feathers that formed their bed, and pulling another and larger one over them for a coverlet, they would fall asleep, undisturbed by the loud, hoarse notes of a flock of *katafs* (frigate birds) that every night settled on the boughs of a great *kaa* tree whose branches overhung the house.

Sometimes when the trade-winds had dropped, and the great ocean rollers would beat heavily upon the far-off shelves of the outer reef, the little island would seem to shake and quiver to its very foundations, and now and then as a huge wave would curl slowly over and break with a noise like a thunder-peal, the frigate-birds would awake from their sleep and utter a solemn answering squawk, and the three girls nestling closer together would whisper—

“’Tis Nanawit, the Cave-god, making another cave.”

Ere the red sun shot out from the ocean the eight dwellers on Takai would rise from their mats; and whilst Ninia the widow would kindle a fire of broken cocoanut shells, the two men slaves would go out and bring back young cocoanuts and taro from the plantation on Tugulu, and their wives would take off their gaily-coloured grass-girdles and tie coarse *nairiris* of cocoanut fibre around them instead, and with the three girls go out to the deep pools on the reef and catch fish. Sometimes they would surprise a turtle in one of the pools, and, diving in after the frightened creature, would capture and bring it home in triumph to Ninia the widow.

Such was the daily life of those who dwelt on Takai.

One day, ere the dews of the night had vanished from the lofty plumes of the cocoanut palms, there came to them a loud cry, borne across the waters of the silent lagoon, over from the village—

“A ship! A ship!”

Now not many ships came to Pingelap—perhaps

now and then some wandering sperm-whaler, cruising lazily along toward the distant Pelew Islands, would heave-to and send a boat ashore to trade for turtle and young drinking cocoanuts. But it was long since any whaleship had called, and Ninia the widow, as she looked out seawards for the ship, said to the girls—

"'Tis not yet the season for the whaleships; four moons more and we may see one. I know not what other ships would come here."

By and by they saw the ship. She sailed slowly round the south point of Pingelap and backed her foreyard, and presently a boat was lowered and pulled ashore.

Little Tarita, clapping her hands with joy, darted into the house, followed by Ruvani and Ninia, and casting off their wet girdles of banana fibre—for they had just come in from fishing—they dressed themselves in their pretty *nairiris* of coloured grasses, and put on head-dresses of green and gold parrots' feathers, with necklaces of sweet-smelling berries around their necks, and were soon paddling across the lagoon to see the white strangers from the ship, who had already landed and gone up the beach and into the village.

It is nearly a mile from Takai to the village, and before the girls reached there they heard a great clamour of angry voices, and presently two white men dressed in white and carrying books in their hands came hurriedly down the beach, followed by a crowd of Sralik's warriors, who urged them along and forced them into the boat.

Then seizing the boat they shot her out into the water, and, shaking their spears and clubs, called out—

"Go, white men, go!"

But although the native sailors who pulled the boat were trembling with fear, the two white men did not seem frightened, and one of them, standing up in the stern of the boat, held up his hand and called out to the angry and excited people—

“Let me speak, I pray you!”

The natives understood him, for he spoke to them in the language spoken by the natives of Strong's Island, which is only a few hundred miles from Pingelap.

The people parted to the right and left as Sralik, the chief, with a loaded musket grasped in his brawny right hand, strode down to the water's edge. Suppressed wrath shone in his eyes as he grounded his musket on the sand and looked at the white man.

“Speak,” he said, “and then be gone.”

The white man spoke.

“Nay, spare us thy anger, O chief. I come not here to fill thy heart with anger, but with peace; and to tell thee of the great God, and of His Son Christ, who hath sent me to thee.”

Sralik laughed scornfully.

“Thou liest. Long ago did I know that some day a white-painted ship would come to Pingelap, and that white men would come and speak to us of this new God and His Son who is called Christ, and would say that this Christ had sent them, and then would the hearts of my people be stolen from Nanawit the Cave-god, and Tuarangi the god of the Skies, and I, Sralik the king, would become but as a slave, for this new God of theirs would steal the hearts of my people from me as well.”

The white man said sorrowfully—

"Nay, that is not so. Who hath told thee this?"

"A better white man than thee—he who slew my enemies and was named Haré (Harry). Long ago did he warn me of thy coming and bid me beware of thee with thy lies about thy new God and His Son Christ."

Again the missionary said—

"Let me speak."

But Sralik answered him fiercely—

"Away, I tell thee, to thy white-painted ship, and trouble me no more," and he slapped the stock of his musket, and his white teeth gleamed savagely through his bearded face.

So the two missionaries went back, and the *Morning Star* filled away again and sailed slowly away to the westward.

That night as the three girls lay on the mats beside the dying embers of the fire, they talked of the strange white men whom Sralik had driven away.

Ninia the widow listened to them from her corner of the house, and then she said musingly—

"I, too, have heard of this God Christ; for when Haré, thy father, lay in my arms with the blood pouring from his wound and death looked out from his eyes, he called upon His name."

Young Ninia and her sister drew closer and listened. Never until now had they heard their mother speak of their white father's death. They only knew that some unknown enemy had thrust a knife into his side as he lay asleep, and Ninia the widow had, with terror in her eyes, forbidden them to talk of it even amongst

themselves. Only she herself knew that Sralik had caused his death. But to-night she talked.

"Tell us more, my mother," said girl Ninia, going over to her, and putting her cheek against her mother's troubled face and caressing her in the darkness.

"Aye, I can tell thee now, my children, for Sralik's anger is dead now. . . . It was at the dawn, just when the first note of the blue pigeon is heard, that I heard a step in the house—'twas the death-men of Sralik—and then a loud cry, and Haré, thy father, awoke to die. The knife had bitten deep and he took my hands in his and groaned.

"'Farewell,' he said, 'O mother of my children, I die!' Then he cried, 'And Thou, O Christ, look down on and forgive me; Christ the Son of God.'

"With my hand pressed to his side, I said: 'Who is it that thou callest upon, my husband? Is it the white man's God?'

"'Aye,' he said, 'this Christ is He whom I have so long denied. He is the Son of the God whose anger I fear to meet now that my soul goes out into darkness.'

"'Fear not,' I said, weeping, 'I, Ninia, will make offerings to this white God and His Son Christ, so that their anger may be softened against thy spirit when it wanders in ghost-land.'

"So he groaned and was dead. And for six or more moons did I put offerings to the white God upon thy father's grave as I had promised. No offerings made I to our own gods, for he despised them even as he despised his own. But yet do I think his *jelin* (spirit) is at rest in ghost-land; else had it come to me in the night and touched me on the forehead as I slept."

III

A month had gone by since the day that Sralik had driven away the "Christ ship," as the people called the *Morning Star*, and then word came over from Sralik to Ruvani, his granddaughter, to come over and take her part in a night-dance and feast to the rain-god, for the year had been a good one and the cocoanut trees were loaded with nuts. For this was the dancing and feasting.

All that day the eight people of Takai were busied in making ready their gifts of food for the feast which was to take place in two days' time. In the afternoon, when the sun had lost its strength, the three girls launched their canoe and set out for a place on the northern point of Pingelap, where grew in great profusion the sweet-smelling *nudu* flower. These would they get to make garlands and necklets to wear at the great dance, in which they were all to take part.

In an hour or two they had gathered all the *nudu* flowers they desired, and then little Tarita looking up saw that the sky was overcast and blackening, and presently some heavy drops of rain fell.

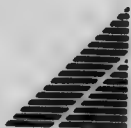
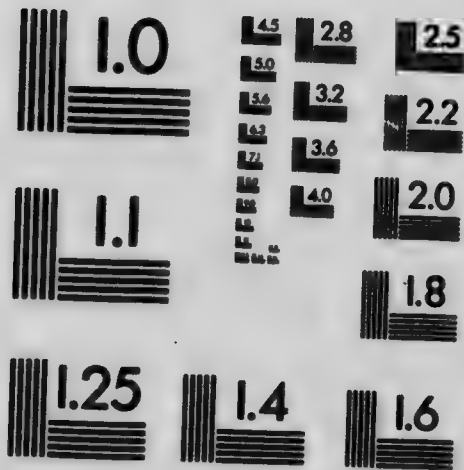
"Haste, haste," she cried to the others, "let us away ere the strong wind which is behind the black clouds overtakes us on the lagoon."

Night comes on quickly in the South Seas, and by the time they had seated themselves in the canoe it was dark. In a little while a sharp rain-squall swept down from the northward, and they heard the wind rattling and crashing through the branches of the palms on Tugulu.



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Ninia, who was steering, boldly headed the canoe across the lagoon for Takai, and laughed when Ruvani and Tarita, who were wet and shivering with the cold rain, urged that they should put in at the beach on Tugulu and walk home.

"Paddle, paddle strongly," she cried, "what mattereth a little rain and wind! And sing, so that our mother will hear us and make ready something to eat. Look, I can already see the blaze of her fire."

Striking their paddles into the water in unison, they commenced to sing, but suddenly their voices died away in terror as a strange, droning hum was borne down to them from the black line of Tugulu shore; and then the droning deepened into a hoarse roaring noise as the wild storm of wind and fierce, stinging rain tore through the groves of cocoanuts and stripped them of leaves and branches.

Brave Ninia, leaning her lithe figure well over the side of the canoe, plunged her paddle deep down and tried to bring the canoe head to wind to meet the danger, and Ruvani, in the bow, with long hair flying straight out behind her, answered her effort with a cry of encouragement, and put forth all her strength to aid.

But almost ere the cry had left her lips, the full fury of the squall had struck them; the canoe was caught in its savage breath, twirled round and round, and then filled.

"Keep thou in the canoe, little one, and bale," cried Ninia to Tarita, as she and Ruvani leaped into the water.

For some minutes the two girls clung with one hand each to the gunwale, and Tarita, holding the

large wooden *ahu*, or baler, in both hands, dashed the water out. Then she gave a trembling cry—the baler struck against the side of the canoe and dropped overboard.

Ninia dared not leave the canoe to seek for it in the intense darkness, and so clinging to the little craft, which soon filled again, they drifted about. The waters of the lagoon were now white with the breaking seas, and the wind blew with fierce, cruel, steadiness, and although they knew it not, they were being swept quickly away from the land towards the passage in the reef.

The rain had ceased now, and the water being warm none of them felt cold, but the noise of the wind and sea was so great that they had to shout loudly to each other to make their voices heard.

Presently Ruvani called out to Ninia—

“Let us take Tarita between us and swim to the shore, ere the sharks come to us.”

“Nay, we are safer here, Ruvani. And how could we tell my mother that the canoe is lost? Let us wait a little and then the wind will die away.”

Canoes are valuable property on Pingelap, where suitable wood for building them is scarce, and this was in Ninia's mind.

They still kept hold of their paddles, and although afraid of the sharks, waited patiently for the storm to cease, little thinking that at that moment the ebbing tide and wind together had swept them into the passage, and that they were quickly drifting away from their island home.

All that night Ninia the widow and her four slaves

sought along the beach of Tugulu for the three girls, who they felt sure had landed there. And when the day broke at last, and they saw that the gale had not ceased and that the canoe had vanished, they ran all the way over to the village, and Ninia threw herself at Sralik's feet.

"Thy granddaughter and my children have perished, O chief."

The chief came to the door of his house and looked out upon the wild turmoil of waters.

"It is the will of the gods," he said, "else had not my whaleboat been crushed in the night," and he pointed to the ruins of the boat-shed upon which a huge cocoanut tree had fallen and smashed the boat.

Then he went back into his house and covered his face, for Ruvani was dear to his savage old heart.

And Ninia went back to her lonely house and wept and mourned for her lost ones as only mothers weep and mourn, be they of white skins or brown.

Away out into the ocean the canoe was swept along, and Ruvani and Ninia still clung to her, one at the head and one at the stern. Once there came a brief lull, and then they succeeded in partly freeing her from water, and Tarita using her two hands like a scoop meanwhile, the canoe at last became light enough for them to get in.

They were only just in time, for even then the wind freshened, and Ninia and Ruvani let the canoe run before it, for they were too exhausted to keep her head to the wind.

When daylight broke Ninia, with fear in her heart, stood up in the canoe and looked all round her.

There was no land in sight ! Poor children ! Even then they could not have been more than twenty miles away from the island, for Pingelap is very low and not visible even from a ship's deck at more than twelve or fifteen miles.

But she was a brave girl, although only fourteen, and when Tarita and Ruvani wept she encouraged them.

"Sralik will come to seek us in the boat," she said, although she could have wept with them.

The wind still carried them along to the westward, and Ninia knew that every hour was taking them further and further away from Pingelap, but, although it was not now blowing hard, she knew that it was useless for them to attempt to paddle against it. So, keeping dead before the wind and sea, they drifted slowly along.

At noon the wind died away, and then, tired and worn out, she and Ruvani lay down in the bottom of the canoe and slept, while little Tarita sat up on the cane framework of the outrigger and watched the horizon for Sralik's boat.

Hour after hour passed, and the two girls still slept. Tarita, too, had lain her weary head down and slumbered with them.

Slowly the sun sank beneath a sea of glassy smoothness, unrippled even by the faintest air, and then Ninia awoke, and, sitting up, tossed her cloud of dark hair away from her face, and looked around her upon the darkening ocean. Her lips were dry and parched, and she felt a terrible thirst.

"Tarita," she called, "art sleeping, dear one ?"

A sob answered her.

"Nay, for my head is burning, and I want a drink."

The whole story of those days of unutterable agony cannot be told here. There, under a torrid sun, without a drop of water or a morsel of food, the poor creatures drifted about till death mercifully came to two of them.

It was on the evening of the second day that Ninia, taking her little sister in her own fast weakening arms, pressed her to her bosom, and, looking into her eyes, felt her thirst-rackened body quiver and then grow still in the strange peacefulness of death. Then a long wailing cry broke upon the silence of the night.

How long she had sat thus with the child's head upon her bosom and her dead sightless eyes turned upward to the glory of the star-lit heavens she knew not; after that one moaning cry of sorrow that escaped from her anguished heart she had sat there like a figure of stone, dull, dazed, and unconscious almost of the agonies of thirst. And then Ruvani, with wild, dreadful eyes and bleeding, sun-baked lips, crept towards her, and, laying her face on Ninia's hand, muttered—

"Farewell, O friend of my heart; I die."

And then, as she lay there with closed eyes and loosened hair falling like a shroud over the form of her dead playmate, she muttered and talked, and then laughed a strange weird laugh that chilled the blood in Ninia's veins. So that night passed, and then, as the fiery sun uprose again upon the wide sweep or lonely sea and the solitary drifting canoe with its load of misery, Ruvani, who still muttered and laughed to herself, suddenly rose up, and with the strength of madness, placing her arms around the stiffened form

of little Tarita, she sprang over the side and sank with her.

Ninia, stretching her arms out piteously, bowed her head, and lay down to die.

She was aroused from her stupor by the cries of a vast flock of sea birds, and, opening her eyes, she saw that the canoe was surrounded by thousands upon thousands of bonita that leaped and sported and splashed about almost within arm's length of her. They were pursuing a shoal of small fish called *atuli*, and these every now and then darted under the canoe for protection. Sometimes, as the hungry bonita pressed them hard, they would leap out of the water, hundreds together, and then the sea birds would swoop down and seize them ere they fell back into the sea.

Ninia, trembling with excitement and the hope of life, watched eagerly. Presently she heard a curious, rippling noise, and then a rapidly-repeated tapping on the outrigger side of the canoe.

Oh! the joy of it; the water was black with a mass of *atuli*, crowded together on the surface, and frightened and exhausted.

She thrust her hands in among them and threw handful after handful into the canoe, and then her dreadful thirst and hunger made her cease, and, taking fish after fish, she bit into them with her sharp teeth, and assuaged both hunger and thirst.

As she tore ravenously at the *atuli* the sky became overcast, and while the bonitas splashed and jumped around her, and the birds cried shrilly overhead, the blessed rain began to fall, at first in heavy drops, and then in a steady downpour.

Taking off her thick grass girdle, she rolled it up into a tight coil and placed it across the bottom of the canoe, about two feet from the bows, so as to form a dam; and then, lying face downwards, she drank and drank till satisfied. Then she counted the *atuli*. There were over forty.

All that day the rain squalls continued, and then the wind settled and blew steadily from the east, and Ninia kept the canoe right before it.

That night she slept but little. A wild hope had sprung up in her heart that she might reach the island of Ponape, which she knew was not many days' sail from Pingelap. Indeed, she had once heard her father and Sralik talking about going there in the whaleboat to sell turtle-shell to the white traders there.

But she did not know that the current and trade wind were setting the canoe quickly away from Ponape towards a group of low-lying atolls called Ngatik.

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The rain had ceased, and in the warm, starlight night she drifted on to the west, and as she drifted she dreamed of her father, and saw Ninia the widow, her mother, sitting in the desolate house on Takai, before the dying embers of the fire, and heard her voice crying:

"O thou white Christ God, to whom my husband called as he died, tell me are my children perished? I pray thee because of the white blood that is in them to protect them and let me behold my beloved again."

The girl awoke. Her mother's voice seemed to still murmur in her ears, and a calm feeling of rest

entered her soul. She took her paddle, and then stopped and thought.

This new God—the Christ-God of her father—perhaps He would help her to reach the land. She, too, would call upon Him, even as her mother had done.

“See, O Christ-God. I am but one left of three. I pray Thee guide my canoe to land, so that I may yet see Ninia my mother once more.”

As the dawn approached she dozed again, and then she heard a sound that made her heart leap—it was the low, monotonous beat of the surf.

When the sun rose she saw before her a long line of low-lying islands, clothed in cocoanuts, and shining like jewels upon the deep ocean blue.

She ate some more of the fish, and, paddling as strongly as her strength would permit, she passed between the passage, entered the smooth waters of the lagoon, and ran the canoe up on to a white beach.

“The Christ-God has heard me,” she said as she threw her wearied form under the shade of the coconut palms and fell into a heavy, dreamless slumber.

And here next morning the people of Ngatik found her. They took the poor wanderer back with them to their houses that were clustered under the palm-groves a mile or two away, and there for two years she dwelt with them, hoping and waiting to return to Pingelap.

One day a ship came—a whaler cruising back to Strong’s Island and the Marshall Group. The captain was told her story by the people of Ngatik, and offered to touch at Pingelap and land her.

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Ninia the widow was still living on Takai, and her once beautiful face had grown old and haggard-looking. Since the night of the storm four ships had called at Pingelap, but she had never once gone over to the village, for grief was eating her heart away; and so, when one evening she heard that a ship was in sight, she took no heed.

Her house was very sad and lonely now, and as night came on she lay down in her end of the house and slept, while the other four people sat round the fire and talked and smoked.

In the middle of the night the four slaves got up and went away to the village, for they wanted to be there when the boat from the ship came ashore.

At daylight the ship was close in, and the people in the village saw a boat lowered. Then a cry of astonishment burst from them when they saw the boat pull straight in over the reef and land at Takai, about a hundred yards from the house of Ninia, the white man's widow.

Only one person got out, and then the boat pushed off again and pulled back to the ship.

Ninia the widow had risen, and was rolling up the mat she had slept upon, when a figure darkened the doorway. She turned wonderingly to see who it was that had come over so early from the village, when the stranger, who was a tall, graceful young girl, sprang forward, and, folding her arms around her, said, sobbing with joy—

"My mother. . . The Christ-God hath brought me back to thee again."

Baldwin's Loise.

MISS LAMBERT.

HER mother was a full-blooded native—a woman of Anaa, in the Chain Islands—her father a dissolute and broken white wanderer. At the age of ten she was adopted by a wealthy South Sea trading captain, living on the East Coast of New Zealand. He, with his childless wife, educated, cared for, and finally loved her, as they once loved a child of their own, dead twenty years before.

At sixteen Loise was a woman; and in the time that had passed since the morning she had seen her reckless, beach-combing father carried ashore at Nukutavake with a skinful of whisky and his pockets full of the dollars for which he had sold her, the tongue and memories of her mother's race had become, seemingly, utterly forgotten.

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But only seemingly; for sometimes in the cold winter months, when savage southerly gales swept over the cloud-blackened ocean from the white fields of Antarctic ice and smote the New Zealand coast with chilling blast, the girl would crouch beside the

fire in Mrs. Lambert's drawing-room, and covering herself with warm rugs, stare into the glowing coals until she fell asleep.

She had not forgotten.

One day a visitor came to see her adopted father. He was captain of a small trading schooner running to the Paumotus—her mother's land—and although old Lambert had long since given up his trading business and voyagings, he liked to meet people from the Islands, and, indeed, kept open house to them; so both he and Mrs. Lambert made him welcome.

The captain of the schooner was a man of a type common enough in the South Seas, rough, good-humoured, and coarsely handsome.

After dinner the two men sat over their whisky and talked and smoked. Mrs. Lambert, always an invalid, had gone to her room, but Loisé, book in hand, lay on a sofa and seemed to read. But she did not read, she listened. She had caught a word or two uttered by the dark-faced, black-bearded skipper—words that filled her with vague memories of long ago. And soon she heard names—names of men, white and brown, whom she had known in that distant, almost forgotten and savage childhood.

When the seaman rose to leave and extended his tanned, sinewy hand to the beautiful "Miss Lambert," and gazed with undisguised admiration into her face, he little thought that she longed to say, "Stay and let me hear more." But she was conventional enough to know better than that, and that her adopted parents would be genuinely shocked to see her anything more than distantly friendly with such a man as a common

trading captain—even though that man had once been one of Lambert's most trusted men. Still, as she raised her eyes to his, she murmured softly, "We will be glad to see you again, Captain Lemaire." And the dark-faced seaman gave her a subtle, answering glance.

All that night she lay awake—awake to the child memories of the life that until now had slumbered within her. From her opened bedroom window she could see the dulled blaze of the city's lights, and hear ever and anon the hoarse and warning roar of a steamer's whistle. She raised herself and looked out upon the waters of the harbour. A huge, black mass was moving slowly seaward, showing only her mast-head and side-lights—some ocean tramp bound northward. Again the boom of the whistle sounded, and then, by the quickened thumping of the propeller, the girl knew that the tramp had rounded the point and was heading for the open sea.

She lay back again on the pillow and tried to sleep. Why couldn't she sleep, she wondered. She closed her eyes. The branches of the pine that grew close to her window rustled and shook to a passing breath of wind, and her eyes opened again. How strangely, though, it sounded to-night, and how her heart was thumping! Again the white lids drooped and half closed again, and the pine branches waved and soughed gently to the breeze.

And then the dead grey of the wall of the room changed to a bright, shimmering white—the white of an island beach as it changes, under the red flush of

the morn, from the shadows of the night to a broad belt of gleaming silver—and the sough of the pine-tree by the window deepened into the humming music of the trade-wind when it passes through the sleeping palms, and a million branches awake trembling to its first breaths and shake off in pearly showers the dews of the night. Again she raced along the clinking sand with her childish, half-naked companions, and heard the ceaseless throb of the beating surf upon the windward reef, and saw the flash of gold and scarlet of a flock of parrakeets that with shrill, whistling note, vanished through the groves of coconuts as they sped mountainwards. Then her latent native soul awoke and made her desperate.

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Ere two days had passed she was missing, and six weeks later a little white-painted schooner hove-to off one of the Paumotu Group, lowered a boat, and landed her amongst the wondering natives.

The dark-faced, black-bearded man who steered the boat held her hand a moment ere he said good-bye.

"It is not too late, Loisé."

She raised her face and laughed scornfully.

"To go back? To go back to hear the old man who was a father and the good woman who was a mother to me, tell me that they hated and despised me!" And then quick, scalding tears.

The man's face flushed. "No, not that, but," with an oath, "look here, if you'll come with me I'll head the schooner for Tahiti, and as soon as she swings to her anchor we will be ashore and married."

She shook her head. "Let me go, Captain Lemaire.

Whatever comes to me, 'tis I alone who must answer for it. And so—good-bye."

She stood and watched the boat hoisted to the davits, and saw the schooner slowly gather way, and then glide past and disappear round the palm-crowned point. Then she turned with streaming eyes and choking voice to the brown-skinned people that stood around her, and spoke to them in her mother's tongue.

So ended the sixteen years' life of the beautiful Miss Lambert and began that of Loisé, the half-blood.

LOISÉ, THE HALF-BLOOD.

There was a wild rush of naked, scurrying feet, and a quick panting of brown bosoms along the winding path that led to Baldwin's house at Rikitea. A trading schooner had just dropped anchor inside the reef, and the runners, young lads and girls—half-naked, lithe-limbed and handsome—like all the people of the "thousand isles," wanted to welcome Baldwin the Trader at his own house door.

Two of them—a boy and girl—gained the trader's gate ahead of their excited companions, and, leaning their backs against the white palings, mocked the rest for their tardiness in the race. With one arm around the girl's lissom waist, the boy, Maturei, short, thickset, muscular, and the bully of the village, beat off with his left hand those who sought to displace them from the gate; and the girl, thin, creole-

faced, with soft, red-lipped mouth, laughed softly at their vexation. Her gaily-coloured grass waist girdle had broken, and presently moving the boy's protecting arm, she tried to tie the band, and as she tied it she rattled out oaths in English and French at the score of brown hands that sought to prevent her.

"*Hui! Hui!!* Away, ye fools, and let me tie my girdle," she said in the native tongue. "'Tis no time now for such folly as this; for, see, the boat is lowered from the ship and in a little time the master will be here."

The merry chatter ceased in an instant and every face turned towards the schooner, and a hundred pair of curious eyes watched. Then, one by one, they sat down and waited; all but the two at the gate, who remained standing, the boy's arm still wound round the girl's waist.

The boat was pulling in swiftly now, and the "click-clack" of the rowlocks reached the listening ears of those on shore.

There were two figures in the stern, and presently one stood up, and taking off his hat, waved it towards the shore.

A roar of welcome from the thronging mass of natives that lined the beach drowned the shrill, piping treble of the children round the gate, and told sturdy old Tom Baldwin that he was recognised, and scarce had the bow of the boat ploughed into the soft sand of the beach when he was seized upon and smothered with caresses, the men with good-natured violence thrusting aside the women and forming a body-guard to conduct him and the young man with him from

the boat to the house. And about the strange white man the people thronged with inquiring and admiring glances, for he was big and strong-looking—and that to a native mind is better than all else in the world.

With joyous, laughing clamour, the natives pressed around the white men till the gate was reached, and then fell back.

The girl stepped forward, and taking the trader's hand, bent her forehead to it in token of submission.

"The key of this thy house, Tāmu," she murmured in the native tongue, as she placed it in his hand.

"Enter thou first, Loisé," and he waved it away.

A faint smile of pleasure illumined her face; Baldwin, rough and careless as he was, was yet studious to observe native custom.

The white men followed her, and then in the open doorway Baldwin stopped, turned, and raised his hand, palm outwards, to the throng of natives without.

"I thank thee, friends, for thy welcome. Dear to mine ears is the sound of the tongue of the men of Rikitea. See ye this young man here. He is the son of my friend who is now dead—he whom some of ye have seen, Kapeni Paraisi" (Captain Brice).

A tall, broad-shouldered native, with his hair streaming down over his shoulders, strode up the steps, and taking the young man's hand in his, placed it to his forehead.

"The son of Paraisi is welcome to Rikitea, and to me, the chief of Rikitea."

There was a murmur of approval; Baldwin waved his hand again, and then, with Brice, entered the house.

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Outside, the boy and girl, seated on the verandah steps, talked and waited for orders.

Said Maturei, "Loisé, think you that now Tāmu hath found thee to be faithful to his house and his name that he will marry thee according to the promise made to the priests at Tenararo when he first brought thee here?"

She took a thick coil of her shining black hair and wound it round and round her hand meditatively, looking out absently over the calm waters of the harbour.

"Who knows, Maturei? And I, I care not. Yet do I think it will be so; for what other girl is there here that knoweth his ways, and the ways of the white men as I know them? And this old man is a glutton; and, so that my skill in baking pigeons and making *karri* and rice fail me not, then am I mistress here. . . . Maturei, is not the stranger an evil-looking man?"

"Evil-looking!" said the boy, wonderingly; "nay, how canst thou say that of him?"

"What a jolly old fellow he is, and how these people adore him!" thought Brice, as they sat down to dinner. Two or three of the village girls waited upon them, and in the open doorway sat a vision of loveliness, arrayed in yellow muslin, and directing the movements of the girls by almost imperceptible motions of her palm-leaf fan.

Brice was strangely excited. The novelty of the surroundings, the wondrous, bright beauty of sea, and shore, and palm-grove that lay within his range of vision were already beginning to weave their fatal spell upon his susceptible nature. And then, again

and again, his glance would fall upon the sweet, oval face and scarlet lips of the girl that sat in the doorway. Who was she? Not old Baldwin's wife, surely! for had not the old fellow often told him that he was not married? . . . And what a lovely spot to live in, this Rikitea! By Jove, he would like to stay a year here instead of a few months only. . . . Again his eyes rested on the figure in the doorway—and then his veins thrilled—Loisé, lazily lifting her long, sweeping lashes had caught his admiring glance.

Brice was no fool with women—that is, he thought so, never taking into consideration that his numerous love affairs had always ended disastrously—to the woman. And his mother, good simple soul, had thought that the best means of taking her darling son away from unapproved-of female society would be a voyage to the islands with old Tom Baldwin!

Dinner was finished, and the two men were sitting out on the verandah smoking and drinking whisky, when Brice said, carelessly—

“I wonder you never married, Baldwin.”

The old trader puffed at his pipe for a minute or two ere he answered—

“Did you notice that girl at all?” and he inclined his head towards the door of the sitting-room.

The young man nodded.

Then the candid Baldwin told him her history. “I can't defend my own position. I am no better than most traders—you see it is the custom here, neither is she worse than any of these half-blooded Paumotuans. If I married a native of this particular island I would only bring trouble on my head. I

could not show any preference for any particular girl for a wife without raising the bitterest quarrels among some of the leading chiefs here. You see, as a matter of fact, I should have married as soon as I came here, twenty years ago; then the trouble would have been over. But I didn't. I can see my mistake now, for I am getting old pretty fast; . . . and now that the missionaries are here, and I do a lot of business with them, I think us white men ought to show them some kind of respect by getting married—properly married—to our wives."

Brice laughed. "You mean, Baldwin, they should get married according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church?"

"Aye," the old trader assented. "Now, there's Loisé, there—a clever, intelligent, well-educated girl, and as far as money or trade goes, as honest as the day. Can I, an old white-headed fool of sixty, go to Australia and ask any *good* woman to marry me, and come and live down here? No."

He smoked in silence awhile, and then resumed.

"Yes; honest and trustworthy she is, I believe; although the white blood in her veins is no recommendation. If ever you should live in the islands, my lad—which isn't likely—take an old fool's advice and never marry a half-caste, either in native fashion or in a church with a brass band and a bishop as leading features of the show."

Loisé came to them. "Will you take coffee, Tāmu?" she asked, standing before them with folded hands.

The trader bent his head, and as the girl with noise-

less step glided gracefully away again he watched her.

"I think I will marry her, Brice. Sometimes when the old Marist priest comes here he makes me feel d——d uncomfortable. Of course he is too much of a gentleman—although he is a sky-pilot—to say all he would like to say, but every time he bids me good-bye he says—cunning old chap—'And think, M. Baldwin, her father, bad as he was, was a *white man*.'"

The young man listened in silence.

"I don't think I will ever go back to civilisation again, my lad—I am no use there. Here I am somebody—there I am nobody; so I think I'll give the old Father a bit of a surprise soon." Then with his merry, chuckling laugh—"and you'll be my best man. You see, it won't make any difference to you. Nearly all that I have, when I peg out, will go to you—the son of my old friend and shipmate."

A curious feeling shot through Brice's heart as he murmured his thanks. The recital of the girl's history made him burn with hot anger against her. He had thought her so innocent. And yet the old trader's words, "I've almost made up my mind to marry her," seemed to dash to the ground some vague hope, he knew not what.

That night he lay on a soft mat on Baldwin's verandah and tried to sleep. But from between the grey-reds of the serried line of palms that encompassed the house on all but the seaward side, a pale face with star-like eyes and ruby lips looked out and smiled upon him; in the distant and ever varying cadences of the breaking surf he heard the sweet melody of her voice;

in the dazzling brilliancy of the starry heavens her haunting face, with eyes alight with love, looked into his.

"D——n!" He rose from his couch, opened the gate, and went out along the white dazzle of the starlit beach. "What the devil is the matter with me? I must be drunk—on two or three nips of whisky. . . . What a glorious, heavenly night! . . . And what a grand old fellow Baldwin is! . . . And I'm an infernal scoundrel to think of her—or a d——d idiot, or a miserable combination of both."

In a few days two things had happened. Baldwin had married Loisé, and Brice was madly in love with her and she with him. Yet scarcely a word had passed between them—he silent because of genuine shame at the treachery of his thoughts to the old man; she because she but bided her time.

One day he accepted an invitation from the old French priest to pay a visit to the Mission. He went away quietly one morning, and then wrote to Baldwin.

"Ten miles is a good long way off," he thought. "I'll be all right in a week or so—then I'll come back and be a fool no longer."

The priest liked the young man, and in his simple, hospitable way, made much of him. On the evening of the third day, as they paced to and fro on the path in the Mission garden, they saw Baldwin's boat sail up to the beach.

"See," said the priest, with a smile, "M. Baldwin will not let me keep you; and Loisé comes with him. So, so, you must go, but you will come again?" and he pressed the young Englishman's hand.

The sturdy figure of the old trader came up through the garden; Loisé, native fashion, walking behind him.

Knitting his heavy white eyebrows in mock anger he ordered Brice to the boat, and then extending his hand to the priest—"I must take him back, Father; the *Malolo* sails to-morrow, and the skipper is coming ashore to-night to dinner, to say good-bye; and, as you know, Father, I'm a silly old man with the whisky bottle, and I'll get Mr. Brice to keep me steady."

The tall, thin old priest raised his finger warningly and shook his head at old Baldwin and then smiled.

"Ah, M. Baldwin, I am very much afraid that I will never make you to understand that too much of the whisky is very bad for the head."

With a parting glass of wine they bade the good Father good-bye, and then hoisting the sail, they stood across for Rikitea. The sun had dipped, and the land-breeze stole softly down from the mountains and sped the boat along. Baldwin was noisy and jocular; Brice silent and ill at ease.

Another hour's run and Baldwin sailed the boat close under the trading schooner's stern. Leaning over the rail was the pyjama-clad captain, smoking a cigar.

"Now then, Harding," bawled the old trader, "don't forget to be up to time, eight o'clock."

"Come aboard, and make out your order for your trade, you noisy old *Areoi* devil," said Harding. "You'll 'make it out ashore,' eh? No fear, I won't trust you, you careless, forgetful old dog. So just lay up alongside, and I'll take you ashore in half an hour."

"By Jupiter, I mustn't forget the order," and Baldwin, finding he could not inveigle the captain ashore just then, ran the boat alongside the schooner and stepped over her rail—"Go on, Brice, my lad. I'll soon be with you. Give him some whisky or beer, or something, Loisé, as soon as you get to the house. He looks as melancholy as a ghost."

As the boat's crew pushed off from the schooner, Brice came aft to steer, and placing his hand on the tiller it touched Loisé's. She moved aside to make room for him, and he heard his name whispered, and in the darkness he saw her lips part in a nappy smile.

Then, still silent, they were pulled ashore.

From his end of the house he heard a soft footfall enter the big room, and then stop. She was standing by the table when, soon after, he came out of his room. At the sound of his footstep she turned the flame of the shaded lamp to its full height, and then raised her face and looked at him. There was a strange, radiant expectancy in her eyes that set his heart to beat wildly. Then he remembered her husband—his friend.

"I suppose Tom won't be long," he began, nervously, when she came over to him and placed her hand on his sleeve. The slumbrous eyes were all aglow now, and her bosom rose and fell in short, quick strokes beneath her white muslin gown.

"Why did you go away?" she said, her voice scarce raised above a whisper, yet quivering and tremulous with emotion.

He tried to look away from her, trembling himself, and not knowing what to say.

"Ah," she said, "speak to me, answer me; why don't you say something to me? I thought that once your eyes sought mine in the boat"—then as she saw him still standing awkward and silent, all her wild passion burst out—"Brice, Brice, I love you, I love you. And you, you hate me." He tried to stop her.

Her voice sank again. "Oh, yes, yes, you hate me, else why would you go away without one word to me? Baldwin has told you of—of—of something. It is all true, quite true, and I am wicked, wicked; no woman could have been worse—and you hate me."

She released her hold upon his arm, and walking over to the window leant against it and wept passionately.

He went over to her and placed his hand upon her shoulder.

"Look here, Loise, I'm very, very sorry I ever came here in the *Matolo*"—her shaking figure seemed to shrink at the words—"for I love you too, but, Loise—your husband was my father's oldest friend—and mine."

The oval, tear-swept face was dangerously close to his now, and set his blood racing again in all the quick, hot madness of youth.

"What is that to me?" she whispered; "I love you."

Brice shut his fists tightly and then—fatal mistake—tried to be angry and tender at the same moment.

"Ah, but Loise, you, as well as I, know that among English people, for a man to love his friend's wife——"

Again the low whisper—"What is that to me—and you? You love me, you say. And, we are not

among English people. I have my mother's heart—not a cold English heart.”

“Loisé, Baldwin is my friend. He looks upon me as his son, and he trusts me—and trusts you. . . . I could never look him in the face again. . . . If he were any other man I wouldn't care, or if, if——”

She lifted her face from his shoulder. “Then you only lied to me. You don't love me!”

That made him reckless. “Love you! By God. I love you so that if you were any other man's wife but his——” He looked steadily at her and then, with gentle force, tried to take her arm from his neck.

She knew now that he was the stronger of the two, and yet wished to hear more.

“Brice, dear Brice,” she bent his head down to her lips, “if Baldwin died would you marry me?”

The faintly murmured words struck him like a shot; she still holding her arms around him, watched his face.

He kissed her on the lips. “I would marry you and never go back to the world again,” he answered, in the blind passion of the moment.

A hot, passionate kiss on his lips and she was gone, and Brice, with throbbing pulses and shame in his heart, took up his hat and went out upon the beach. He couldn't meet Baldwin just then. Other men's wives had never made him feel such a miserable scoundrel as did this reckless half-blood with the scarlet lips and starry eyes.

That night old Baldwin and the captain of the *Malolo* got thoroughly drunk in the orthodox and time-honoured Island business fashion. Brice, afraid

of "making an ass of himself," was glad to get away, and took the captain on board at midnight in Baldwin's boat, and at the mate's invitation remained for breakfast.

At daylight the mate got the *Mahb* under weigh, the skipper, with aching head, sitting up in his bunk and cursing the old trader's hospitality.

When the vessel was well outside the reef, Brice bade him good-bye, and getting his boat alongside started for the shore.

"I will—I must—clear out of this," he was telling himself as the boat swept round the point of the passage on the last sweep of the ocean swell. "I can't stay under the same roof with him day after day, month after month, and not feel my folly and her weakness. But where the deuce I can get to for five months till the schooner comes back, I don't know. There's the Mission, but that is too close; the old fellow would only bring me back again in a week."

Suddenly a strange, weird cry pealed over the water from the native village, a cry that to him was mysterious, as well as mournful and blood-chilling.

The four natives who pulled the boat had rested on their oars the instant they heard the cry, and with alarm and deep concern depicted on their countenances were looking toward the shore.

"What is it, boys?" said Brice in English.

Before the native to whom he spoke could answer, the long, loud wailing cry again burst forth.

"Some man die," said the native who pulled stroke-oar to Brice—he was the only one who knew English.

Then Brice, following the looks of his crew, saw

that around the white paling fence that enclosed Baldwin's house was gathered a great concourse of natives, most of whom were sitting on the ground.

"Give way, boys," he said, with an instinctive feeling of fear that something dreadful had happened. In another five minutes the boat touched the sand and Brice sprang out.

Maturei alone, of all the motionless, silent crowd that gathered around the house, rose and walked down to him.

"Oh, white man, Tāmu is dead !"

He felt the shock terribly, and for a moment or two was motionless and nerveless. Then the prolonged wailing note of grief from a thousand throats again broke out and brought him to his senses, and with hasty step he opened the gate and went in.

With white face and shaking limbs Loisé met him at the door and endeavoured to speak, but only hollow, inarticulate sounds came from her lips, and sitting down on a cane sofa she covered her face with her robe, after the manner of the people of the island when in the presence of death.

Presently the door of Baldwin's room opened, and the white-haired old priest came out and laid his hand sympathetically on the young man's arm, and drew him aside.

He told him all in a few words. An hour before daylight Loisé and the boy Maturei had heard the old trader breathing stertorously, and ere they could raise him to a sitting position he had breathed his last.

Heart disease, the good Father said. And he was so careless a man, was M. Baldwin. And then with

tears in his eyes the priest told Brice how, from the olden times when Baldwin, pretending to scoff at the efforts of the missionaries, had yet ever been their best and truest friend.

"And now he is dead, M. Brice, and had I been but a little sooner I could have closed his eyes. I was passing in my boat, hastening to take the mission letters to the *Malolo*, when I heard the *tagi* (the death wail) of the people here, and hastening ashore found he had just passed away."

Sick at heart as he was, the young man was glad of the priest's presence, and presently together they went in and looked at the still figure in the bedroom.

When they returned to the front room they found Loisé had gone.

"She was afraid to stay in the house of death," said Maturei, "and has gone to Vehaga" (a village eight miles away), "and these are her words to the Father and to the friend of Tāmu—'Naught have I taken from the house of Tāmu, and naught do I want'—and then she was gone."

The old priest nodded to Brice—"Native blood, native blood, M. Brice. Do not, I pray you, misjudge her. She only does this because she knows the village feeling against her. She does not belong to this island, and the people here resented, in a quiet way, her marriage with my old friend. She is not cruel and ungrateful as you think. It is but her way of showing these natives that she cares not to benefit by Baldwin's death. By and by we will send for her."

After Baldwin had been buried and matters

arranged, Brice and the priest, and a colleague from the Mission, read the will, and Brice found himself in possession of some two or three thousand dollars in cash and as much in trade. The house at Rikitea and a thousand dollars were for Loisé.

He told the Fathers to send word over to Vehaga and tell Loisé that he only awaited her to come and take the house over from him. As for himself he would gladly accept their kind invitation to remain at the Mission as their guest till the schooner returned.

The shock of his friend's death had all but cured him of his passion, and he felt sure now of his own strength.

But day after day, and then week after week passed, and no word came from Vehaga, till one evening as he leant over the railing of the garden, looking out upon the gorgeous setting of the sun into the ocean, Maturei came paddling across the smooth waters of the harbour, and, drawing his canoe up on the beach, the boy approached the white man.

"See," he said, "Loisé hath sent thee this."

He unrolled a packet of broad, dried palm leaves, and taking from it a thick necklet of sweet-smelling *kurahini* buds, placed it in Brice's hand.

He knew its meaning—it was the gift of a woman to an accepted lover.

The perfume of the flowers brought back her face to him in a moment. There was a brief struggle in his mind; and then home, friends, his future prospects in the great outside world, went to the wall, and the half-blood had won.

Slowly he raised the token and placed it over his heart and round his neck.

In the morning she came. He held out his hand and drew her to him, and looking down into her eyes, he kissed her. Her lips quivered a little, and then the long lashes fell, and he felt her tremble.

"Loisé," he said simply, "will you be my wife?"

She glanced up at him, fearfully.

"Would you marry me?"

His face crimsoned—"Yes, of course. You were his wife. I can't forget that. And, besides, you said once that you loved me."

They were very happy for five or six years down there in Rikitea. They had one child born to them—a girl with a face as beautiful as her mother's.

Then a strange and deadly epidemic, unknown to the people of Rikitea, swept through the Paumotu Group, from Pitcairn Island to Marutea, and in every village, on every palm-clad atoll, death stalked, and the brown people sickened and shivered under their mat coverings, and died. And from island to island, borne on the very breath of the trade-wind, the terror passed, and left behind it empty, silent clusters of houses, nestling under the cocoanuts; and many a whale-ship beating back to the coast of South America, sailed close in to the shore and waited for the canoes to come off with fruit and vegetables; but none came, for the canoes had long months before blistered and cracked and rotted under the fierce rays of the Paumotu sun, and

the owners lay dead in their thatched houses ; for how could the dead bury the dead ?

It came to Rikitea, and Harry Brice and the priests of the Mission went from village to village trying by such means as lay in their power to allay the deadly scourge. Brice had seen his little girl die, and then Loisé was smitten, and in a few days Brice saw the imprint of death stamped upon her features.

As he sat and watched by her at night, and listened to the wild, delirious words of the fierce fever that held her in its cruel grasp, he heard her say that which chilled his very heart's blood. At first he thought it to be but the strange imaginings of her weak and fevered brain. But as the night wore on he was undeceived.

Just as daylight began to shoot its streaks of red and gold through the plumed palm-tops, she awoke from a fitful and tortured slumber, and opened her eyes to gaze upon the haggard features of her husband.

"Loisé," he said, with a choking voice, "tell me, for God's sake, the truth about Baldwin. *Did you kill him?*"

She put her thin, wasted hands over her dark, burning eyes, and Brice saw the tears run down and wet the pillow.

Then she answered—

"Yes, I killed him ; for I loved you, and that night I went mad !"

"Don't go away from me, Harry," she said, with hard, panting breaths ; "don't let me die by my-

self. . . . I will soon be dead now ; come closer to me, I will tell you all."

He knelt beside her and listened. She told him all in a few words. As Baldwin lay in his drunken sleep, she and Maturei had pierced him to the heart with one of the long, slender, steel needles used by the natives in mat-making. There was no blood to be seen in the morning, Maturei was too cunning for that.

Brice staggered to his feet and tried to curse her. The last grey pallor had deepened on her lips, and they moved and murmured, "It was because I loved you, Harry."

The sun was over the tops of the cocoanuts when the gate opened, and the white-haired old priest came in and laid his hand gently on Brice who sat with bowed figure and hidden face.

"How is your wife now, my good friend?" he asked.

Slowly the trader raised his face, and his voice sounded like a sob.

"Dead ; thank God !"

With softened tread the old man passed through to the inner room, and taking the cold hands of Brice's wife tenderly within his own, he clasped them together and placed the emblem of Christ upon the quiet bosom.

At a Kava-Drinking.

THE first cool breaths of the land breeze, chilled by its passage through the dew-laden forest, touched our cheeks softly that night as we sat on the traders' verandah, facing the white, shimmering beach, smoking and watching the native children at play, and listening for the first deep boom of the wooden *logo* or bell that would send them racing homewards to their parents and evening prayer.

"There it is," said our host, who sat in the farthest corner, with his long legs resting by the heels on the white railing; "and now you'll see them scatter."

The loud cries and shrill laughter came to a sudden stop as the boom of the *logo* reached the players, and then a clear, boyish voice reached us—"Ua ta le *logo*" (the bell has sounded). Like smoke before the gale the lithe, half-naked figures fled silently in twos and threes between the cocoanuts, and the beach lay deserted.

One by one the lights gleamed brightly through the trees as the women piled the fires in each house with broken cocoanut shells. There was but the

faintest breath of wind, and through the open sides of most of the houses not enough to flicker the steady light, as the head of the family seated himself (or herself) close to the fire, and, hymn-book in hand, led off the singing. Quite near us was a more pretentious-looking structure than the others, and looking down upon it we saw that the gravelled floor was covered with fine, clean mats, and arranged all round the sides of the house were a number of camphorwood boxes, always—in a Samoan house—the outward and visible sign of a well-to-do man. There was no fire lighted here; placed in the centre of the one room there stood a lamp with a gorgeous-looking shade, of many colours. This was the chief's house, and the chief of Aleipatu was one of the strong men of Samoa—both politically and physically. Two of our party on the verandah were strangers to Samoa, and they drew their chairs nearer, and gazed with interest at the chief and his immediate following as they proceeded with their simple service. There were quite a number of the *ava-luma* (unmarried women) of the village present in the chief's house that evening, and as their tuneful voices blend in an evening hymn—“*Matou te nau e faafetai*”—we wished that instead of four verses there had been ten.

“Can you tell us, Lester,” said one of the strangers to our host, “the meaning of the last words?—they came out so clearly that I believe I’ve caught them,” and to our surprise he sang the last line—

Ia matou mae tau ia te oe.

“Well, now, I don’t know if I can. Samoan hymns

puzzle me; you see the language used in addressing the Deity is vastly different to that used ordinarily, but I take it that the words you so correctly repeated mean, 'Let us sleep in peace with Thee.' Curious people these Samoans," he muttered, more to himself than for us: "soon be as hypocritical as the average white man. 'Let us sleep in peace with Thee,' and that fellow (the chief), his two brothers, and about a paddockful of young Samoan bucks haven't slept at all for this two weeks. All the night is spent in counting cartridges, melting lead for bullets, and cleaning their arms, only knocking off for a drink of kava. Well, I suppose," he continued, turning to us, "they're all itching to fight, and as soon as the U.S.S. *Resacca* leaves Apia they'll commence in earnest, and us poor devils of traders will be left here doing nothing and cursing this infernal love of fighting, which is inborn with Samoans and a part of their natural cussedness which, if the Creator hadn't given it to them, would have put many a dollar into my pocket."

"Father," said a voice that came up to us from the gloom of the young cocoanuts' foliage at the side of the house, "Felipe is here, and wants to know if he may come up and speak to the *alii papalagi* (white gentlemen)."

"Right you are, Felipe, my lad," said the trader in a more than usual kindly voice, "bring him up, Atalina, and then run away to the chief's and get some of the *aua-luma* to come over with you and make a bowl of kava."

"Now, Doctor L——," Lester continued, addressing himself to one of his guests, the surgeon of an

American war vessel then stationed in Samoa, and a fellow-countryman of his, "I'll show you as fine a specimen of manhood and intelligence as God ever made, although he has got a tanned hide."

The native that ascended the steps and stood before us with his hat in his hand respectfully saluting, was indeed, as Lester called him, "a fine specimen." Clothed only in a blue and white *lava lava* or waist-cloth, his clean-cut limbs, muscular figure, and skin like polished bronze, stood revealed in the full light that now flooded room and verandah from the lamp lit in the sitting-room. The finely-plaited Manhiki hat held in his right hand seemed somewhat out of place with the rest of his attire, and was evidently not much worn. Probably Felipe had merely brought it for the occasion, as a symbol to us of his superior tastes and ideas.

He shook hands with us all round, and then, at Lester's invitation, followed us inside, and sat down cross-legged on the mats and courteously awaited us to talk to him. The American surgeon offered him a cigar, which he politely declined, and produced from the folds of his *lava lava* a bundle of banana-leaf cigarettes, filled with strong tobacco. One of these, at a nod from the trader, he lit, and commenced to smoke.

In a few minutes we heard the crunching of the gravelled path under bare feet, and then some three or four of the *aua-luma*—the kava-chewing girls—ascended the steps and took up their position by the huge wooden kava bowl. As the girls, under the

careful supervision of the trader's wife, prepared the drink, we fell into a general conversation.

"I wonder now," said the doctor to the trader, "that you, Lester, who, by your own showing, are by no means infatuated with the dreamy monotony of island life, can yet stay here, year after year, seeing nothing and hearing nothing of the world that lies outside these lonely islands. Have you no desire at all to go back again into the world?"

A faint movement—the index of some rapidly passing emotion—for a moment disturbed the calm, placid features of Lester, as he answered quietly: "No, doctor, I don't think it's likely I'll ever see the outside world, as you call it, again. I've had my hopes and ambitions, like every one else; but they didn't pan out as I expected, . . . and then I became Lester the Trader, and as Lester the Trader I'll die, have a whitey-brown crowd at my funeral; and, if you came here ten years afterwards, the people couldn't even tell you where I was planted."

The doctor nodded. "Just so. Like all native races, their affections and emotions are deep but transient—no better in that way than the average American nigger."

The kava was finished now, and was handed round to us by the slender graceful hands of the trader's little daughter. As Felipe, the last to drink, handed back the *ipu* to the girl, his eyes lit up, and he spoke to our host, addressing him, native fashion, by his Christian name, and speaking in his own tongue.

"How is it, Tiaki (Jack), that I hear thee tell these thy friends that we of the brown skins have but shallow hearts and forget quickly? Dost think

that if, when thy time comes, and thou goest, that thy wife and child will not grieve? Hast thou not heard of our white man who, when he died, yet left his name upon our hearts?—and yet we were in those days heathens and followers of our own gods.”

The trader nodded kindly, and turned to us. “Do you want to hear a yarn about one of the old style of white men that used to live like fighting-cocks in Samoa? Felipe here has rounded on me for saying that his countrymen soon forget, and has brought up this wandering *papalagi tafia* (beachcomber) as an instance of how the natives will stick to a man once he proves himself a man.”

II.

“It was the tenth year after the Cruel Captain with the three ships had anchored in Apia,² and when we of Aleipata were at war with the people of Fagaloa. In those days we had no white man in this town and longed greatly to get one. But they were few in Samoa then; one was there at Tiavea, who had fled from a man-of-war of England, one at Saluafata, and perhaps one or two more at Tutuila or Savaii—that was all.

“My father’s name was Lauati. He, with his mother, lived on the far side of the village, away from the rest of the houses. There were no others living in the house with them, for my father’s mother was very poor, and all day long she laboured—some-

² Commodore Wilkes, in command of the famous United States Exploring Expedition, 1836-40. He was a noted martinet, and was called *Le alii Saus* (the Cruel Captain).

times at making mats, and sometimes at beating out *siepe* (tappa) cloth. As the mats were made, and the tappa was bleached, and figures and patterns drawn upon it, she rolled them up and put them away overhead on the beams of the house, for she was eaten up with poverty, and these mats and tappa cloth was she gathering together so that she might be able to pay for my father's tattooing. And as she worked on the shore, so did my father toil on the sea, for although he was not yet tattooed he was skilled more than any other youth in *sisu atu* (bonita catching). Sometimes the chief, who was a greedy man, would take all his fish and leave him none for himself to take home to his house. Sometimes he would give him one, and then my father would cut off a piece for his mother, and take the rest and sell it for taro and bread-fruit. And all this time he worked, worked with his mother, so that he would have enough to pay for his tattooing, for to reach his age and not be tattooed is thought a disgrace.

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"Now, in the chief's house was a young girl named Uluvao. She used to meet my father by stealth, for the chief—who was her uncle—designed to give her in marriage to a man of Siumu, who was a little chief, and had asked him for her. So Uluvao, who dreaded her uncle's wrath, would creep out at night from his house, and going down to the beach swim along the shore till she came to the lonely place where my father lived. His mother would await her coming on the beach, and then these three would sit together in the house and talk. If a footstep sounded, then the girl would flee, for she knew her uncle's club

would soon bite into my father's brain did he know of these stolen meetings.

"One day it came about that a great *fono* (meeting) was to be held at Falealili, and Tuialo, the chief, and many other chiefs, and their *tulafale*, or talking men, set out to cross the mountains to Falealili. Six days would they be away, and Uluvao and my father rejoiced, for they could now meet and speak openly, for the fear of the chief's face was not before them, and the people of the village knew my father loved the girl, so when they saw them together they only smiled, or else turned their faces another way. That night, in the big council house, there was a great number of the young men and women gathered together, and they danced and sang, and much kava was drunk. Presently the sister of the chief, who was a woman with a bitter tongue, came to the house, and saw and mocked at my father, and called him a 'naked wretch.' ('Thou knowest, Tiaki, if a man be not tattooed we called him naked.)

"'Alas!' said my father, 'I am poor; oh, lady, how can I help it?'

"The old woman's heart softened. 'Get thee out upon the sea and catch a fat turtle for a gift to my brother, and thou shalt be tattooed when he returns,' she said.

"The people laughed, for they knew that turtle were not to be caught at a silly woman's bidding. But my father rose up and went out into the darkness towards his house. As he walked on the sand his name was called, and Uluvao ran by his side.

"'Lauati,' she said, 'let me come with thee. Let

us hasten and get thy canoe, and seek a turtle on Nu'ulua and Nu'utele, for the night is dark, and we may find one.'

"My father took her hand, and they ran and launched the canoe.

"My father paddled, Uluvaio sat in the bow of the canoe. The night was very dark, and she was frightened, for in the waters hereabout are many *tanifa*, the thick, short shark, that will leap out of the water and fall on a canoe and crush it, so that those who paddle may be thrown out and devoured. And as she trembled she looked out at the shore of the two islands, which were now close to, and said to my father, 'Lo! what is this? I see a light as of a little fire.'

"Lauati ceased to paddle and looked. And there, between the trunks of the cocoanuts, he saw the faint gleam of a little fire, and something, as of a figure, that moved.

"The girl Uluvaio had a quick wisdom. 'Ah,' said she, 'perhaps it is the war canoes (taumualua) from Falifa. Those dogs hath learnt that all our men are gone away to Falealili to the *fono*, and they have come here to the islands to eat and rest, so that they may fall upon our town when it is dawn, and slay us all. Let us back, ere it is too late.'

"But as she spoke she looked into the water, and my father looked too; and they both trembled. Deep down in the blackness of the sea was it that they saw—yet it quickly came nearer and nearer, like unto a great flame of white fire. It was a *tanifa*. Like flashes of lightning did my father dash his paddle into

the water and urge the canoe to the land, for he knew that when the *tanifa* had come to the surface it would look and then dive, and when it came up again would spring upon and devour them both.

"It is better to give our heads to the men of Falifa than for us to go into the belly of the shark,' he said, 'and it may be we can land, and they see us not.' And so with fear gnawing at their vitals the canoe flew along, and the streak of fire underneath was close upon them when they struck the edge of the coral and knew they were safe.

"They dragged the canoe over the reef and then got in again, and paddled softly along till they passed the light of the fire, and then they landed on a little beach about a hundred *gafa* (fathoms) away. Then again Uluvao, who was a girl of wisdom, spoke.

"Listen,' she said, 'O man of my heart. Let us creep through the bushes and look. It may be that these men of Falifa are tired and weary, and sleep like hogs. Take thou, then, O Lauati, thy shark club and knife from the canoe, and perchance we may fall upon one that sleepest away from the rest, then shalt thou strike, and thou and I drag him away into the bushes and take his head. Then, ere it is well dawn, we will be back in the town, and Tuialo will no longer keep me from thee, for the head of a Falifa man will win his heart better than a fat turtle, and I will be wife to thee.'

"My father was pleased at her words. So they crept like snakes along the dewy ground. When they came to a jagged boulder covered with vines, that was

near unto the fire, they looked and saw but one man, and, lo! he was a *papalagi*—a white man. And then, until it was dawn, my father and the girl hid behind the jagged rock and watched.

“The white man was sitting on the sand, with his face clasped in his hands. At his feet lay another man, with his white face turned up to the sky, and those that watched saw that he was dead. He who sat over the dead man was tall and thin, and his hands were like the talons of the great fish eagle, so thin and bony were they. His garments were ragged and old, and his feet were bare; and as my father looked at him his heart became pitiful, and he whispered to Uluvaio, ‘Let us call out. He is but weak, and I can master him if he springs upon me. Let us speak.’

“But Uluvaio held him back. ‘Nay,’ she said, ‘he may have a gun and shoot.’

“So they waited till the sun rose.

“The white man stood and looked about. Then he walked down to the beach, and my father and the girl saw lying on the rocks a little boat. The man went to the side, and put in his hand and brought out something in his hand, and came back and sat down again by the face of the dead. He had gone to the boat for food, and my father saw him place a biscuit to his mouth and commence to eat. But ere he swallowed any it fell from his hand upon the sand and he threw himself upon the body of the dead man and wept, and his tears ran down over the face that was cold and were drank up by the sand.

"Then Uluvao began to weep, and my father stood up and called out to the white man *Talofa* !

"He gazed at them and spoke not, but let them come close to him, and pointing to him who lay on the sand, he covered his face with his hands and bowed his head. Then Lauati ran and climbed a cocoanut tree and brought him two young nuts and made him drink, and Uluvao got broad leaves and covered over the face of the dead from the hot sun. Not one word of our tongue could he speak, but yet from signs that he made Lauati and the girl knew that he wished to bury the dead man. So they two dug a deep grave in the sand, far up on the bank, where it lay soft and deep and covered with vines. When it was finished they lifted the dead white man and laid him beside it. And as they looked upon him the other came and knelt beside it and spoke many words into the ear that heard not, and Uluvao wept again to see his grief. At last they laid him in the grave and all three threw in the sand and filled it up.

"Then these two took the strange white man by the hand and led him away into a little hut that was sometimes used by those who came to the island to fish. They made him eat and then sleep, and while he slept they carried up the things out of the boat and put them in the house beside him.

"When the sun was high in the heavens, the white man awoke, and my father took his hand and pointed to the boat, and then to the houses across the sea. He bent his head and followed, and they all got into the boat, and hoisted the sail. When the boat came close to the passage of Aleipata, the people ran from

out their houses, and stood upon the beach and wondered. And Lauati and Uluvaio laughed and sang, and called out: 'Ho, ho, people! we have brought a great gift—a white man from over the sea. Send word quickly to Tuialo that he may return and see this our white man,' and, as the boat touched the sand, the old woman, the sister of Tuialo, came up, and said to Lauati, 'Well hast thou done, O lucky one! Better is this gift of a white man than many turtle.'

"Then she took the stranger to her house, and pigs and fowls were killed, and yams and taro cooked, and a messenger sent to Tuialo to hasten back quickly, and see this gift from the gods. For they were quick to see that in the boat were muskets and powder and bullets, and all the people rejoiced, for they thought that this white man could mend for them many guns that were broken and useless, and help them to fight against the men of Falifa.

"In two days Tuialo came back, and he made much of the white man, and Uluvaio he gave to my father for wife. And for the white man were the softest mats and the best pieces of *siapo*, and he lived for nearly the space of two years in the chief's house. And all this time he worked at making boats and mending the broken guns and muskets, and little by little the words of our tongue came to him, and he learned to tell us many things. Yet at night-time he would always come to my father's house and sit with him and talk, and sometimes Uluvaio would make kava for him and my father.

"At about the end of the second year, there came a

whaleship, and Tuialo, and the white man, whom we called *Tui-fana*, 'the gun-mender,' went out to her, and took with them many pigs and yams to exchange for guns and powder. When the buying and selling was over, the captain of the ship gave *Tui-fana* a gun with two barrels—bright was it and new, and Tuialo, the chief, was eaten up with envy, and begged his white man for the gun, but he said: 'Nay, not now; when we are in the house we will talk.'

"Like as a swarm of flies, the people gathered round the council-house to see the guns and the powder and the swords that had been brought from the ship. And in the middle of the house sat *Tui-fana* with the gun with two barrels in his hand.

"When all the chiefs had come in and sat down Tuialo came. His face was smiles, but his heart was full of bitterness towards *Tui-fana*, and as he spoke to the people and told them of the words that had been spoken by the captain of the ship, he said, 'And see this white man, this *Tui-fana*, who hath grown rich among us, is as greedy as a Tongan, and keepeth for himself a new gun with two barrels.'

"The white stood up and spoke: 'Nay, not greedy am I. Take, O chief, all I have; my house, my mats, my land, and the wife thou gavest me, but yet would I say, "Let me keep this gun with the two barrels."'

"Tuialo was eaten up with greed, yet was his mind set on the gun, so he answered, 'Nay, that were to make thee as poor as when thou comest to us. Give me the gun, 'tis all I ask.'

"'It is not mine to give,' he answered. Then he

rose and spoke to the people. 'See,' said he, 'Tuialo, the chief, desires this gun, and I say it is not mine to give, for to Lauati did I promise such a gun a year gone by. This, then, will I do. Unto Tuialo will I give my land, my house, and all that is mine, but to Lauati I give the gun, for so I promised.'

"Then fierce looks passed between the chief and the white man, and the people surged together to and fro, for they were divided, some for the fear of the chief, and some for the love of the white man. But most were for that Lauati should keep the gun. And so Tuialo, seeing that the people's hearts were against him, put on a smooth face, and came to the white man and said—

"'Thou art as a son to me. Lauati shall keep the gun, and thou shalt keep thy house and lands. I will take nothing from thee. Let us be for ever friends.'

"Then the white said to the chief, 'O chief, gladly will I give thee all I have, but this man, Lauati, is as my brother, and I promised——'

"But Tuialo put his hand on the white man's mouth, and said, 'Say no more, my son; I was but angered.'

"Yet see now his wickedness. For that night, when my father and Uluvao, my mother, were sitting with the white man and his wife, and drinking kava, there suddenly sprang in upon them ten men, who stood over them with clubs poised. They were the body-men of Tuialo.

"'Drink thy kava,' said one to the white man, 'and then come out to die.'

"Ah, he was a man! He took the cup of kava from the hands of his wife's sister, and said—

"'It is well. All men must die. But yet would I see Tuialo before the club falls.'

"The chief but waited outside, and he came.

"'Must I die?' said the white man.

"'Ay,' said Tuialo. 'Two such as thee and I cannot live at the same time. Thou art almost as great a man as I.'

"The white man bent his head. Then he put out his hand to my father and said, 'Farewell, O my friend.'

"Lauati, my father, fell at the chief's feet. 'Take thou the gun, O chief, but spare his life.'

"Tuialo laughed. 'The gun will I take, Lauati, but his life I must have also.'

"'My life for his,' said my father.

"'And mine,' said Uluvaio, my mother.

"'And mine also,' said Manini, the white man's wife; and both she and Taulaga, her sister, bent their knees to the chief.

"The white man tried to spring up, but four strong men held him.

"Then Tuialo looked at the pair who knelt before him. He stroked his club, and spoke to his body-men.

"'Bring them all outside.' They went together to the beach. 'Brave talkers ye be,' said he; 'who now will say "I die for the white man"?''

"'Nay, heed them not, Tuialo,' said the white man. 'On me alone let the club fall.'

"But the chief gave him no answer, looking only at my father and the three women.

"My life,' said Taulaga, the girl; and she knelt on the sand.

"The club swung round and struck her on the side of her head, and it beat it in. She fell, and died quickly.

"Oho,' mocked Tuialo, 'is there but one life offered for so great a man as Tiufana?'

"Lauati fell before him. 'Spare me not, O chief, if my life but saves his.'

"And again the club swung, and Lauati, my father, died too, and as he fell his blood mixed with that of Taulaga.

"And then Uluvao and Manini, placing some little faith in his mocking words, knelt, and their blood too poured out on the ground, and the three women and my father lay in a heap together.

"Now I, Felipe, was but a child, and when my mother had gone to kneel under the club she had placed me under a *fetan* tree near by. The chief's eye fell on me, and a man took me up and carried me to him.

"Then the white man said, 'Hurt not the child, O chief, or I curse thee before I die, and thou wastest away.'

"So Tuialo spared me.

"Then the chief came to the white man, and the two who held his hands pulled them well apart, and Tuialo once more swung his blood-dyed club. It fell, and the white man's head fell upon his breast."

Mrs. Liardet: a South Sea Trading Episode.

CAPTAIN DAVE LIARDET, of the trading schooner *Motutakea*, of Sydney, was sitting propped up in his bunk smoking his last pipe. His very last. He knew that, for the Belgian doctor-naturalist, his passenger, had just said so; and besides, one look at the gaping hole in his right side, that he had got two days before at La Vandola, in the Admiralties, from the broad-bladed obsidian native knife, had told him he had made his last voyage. The knife-blade lay on the cabin table before him, and his eye rested on it for a moment with a transient gleam of satisfaction as he remembered how well Tommy, the Tonga boy, who pulled the bow oar, had sent a Snider bullet through the body of the yellow-skinned buck from whom the knife-thrust had come. From the blade of obsidian on the table his eye turned to the portrait of a woman in porcelain that hung just over the clock. It was a face fair enough to look at, and Liardet, with a muttered curse of physical agony, leant his body forward to get a closer view of it, and said, "Poor little woman; it'll be darned rough on her." Then Russell, the mate, came down.

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"Joe," said Liardet, in his practical way, which even the words of the doctor and the face of the clock before him could not change, "cock your ears and listen, for I haven't got much time, and you have the ship to look to. I want you to tell the owners that this affair at La Vandola wasn't my fault. We was doing fair and square trading when a buck drives his knife into me for no apparent reason beyond the simple damned fun of the thing. Well, he's done for me, and Tommy Tonga for him, and that's all you've got to say about that. Next thing is to ask 'em to sling Tommy a fiver over and above his wages—for saving of the boat and trade, mind, Joe. Don't say for potting the nigger, Joe; boat and trade, boat and trade, that's the tack to go on with owners, Joe. Well, let's see now. . . . My old woman. See she gets fair play, wages up to date of death, eh, Joe? By God, old man, she won't get much of a cheque—only four months out now from Sydney. Look here, Joe, the Belgian's all right. He won't go telling tales. So don't you log me dead for another month, and make as bad a passage as you can. There's only us three white men aboard, and the native boys will take their Bible oath I didn't die until the ship was off Lord Howe Island if you give 'em a box of tobacco. You see, Joe? That's the dodge. More days, more dollars, and the longer you keep the ship at sea the more money comes to all hands. And I know I can trust you, Joe, to lend a hand in making the old woman's cheque a little bigger. Right. . . . We've been two years together now, Joe, and this is the only thing I've ever asked you to do or done myself that wasn't square and aboveboard. But look

here"—here, for some half-minute, Captain Dave Liardet launched into profanity—"I tell you that the owners of this ship wouldn't care a single curse if you and I and every living soul aboard had had our livers cut out at La Vandola as long as *they* didn't lose money over it, and haven't to pay our wages to our wives and children."

Liardet gasped and choked, and the little Belgian naturalist tripped down and wiped away the dark stream that began to trickle down the grizzled beard, and then he and Russell, the mate, laid him down again.

"Don't go," whispered the Belgian to the other, "he sink ver' fast now." The closed eyelids opened a little and looked up through the skylight at the brown face of Tommy the Tongan, and then Russell gave the dying skipper brandy and water. Then, with fast-fading eyes on the picture in porcelain, he asked Russell what course he was keeping.

"As near south as can be," said the mate, "but with this breeze we could soon make the Great Barrier, and there's always hope, cap'n. Let me keep her away to the westward a bit, and who knows but you may——"

For answer the grizzled Liardet held out his hand, shook his head faintly, and muttering, "I hope to God it'll come on a Hell of a Calm for a Month of Sundays," he turned his face to the port and went over *his* Great Barrier.

Every one was "so sorry for poor little Mrs. Liardet." She was so young to be a widow, "and

having no children, my dear, the poor creature must have felt the shock the more keenly." Thus the local gabble of the acquaintances and friends of the pretty widow. And she laughed softly to herself that she couldn't feel overwhelmed with grief at her widowhood. "He hadn't a thought above making money," she said to herself—oh, Nell Liardet, for whom did he desire to make it!—"and yet never could make it." And then she thought of Russell, and smiled again. His hand had trembled when it held hers. Surely he did not come so often to see her merely to talk of rough, old Dave Liardet. A man whom she had only tolerated—never loved. And then, Russell was a big, handsome man; and she liked big, handsome men. Also, he was captain now. And, of course, when he had told her of that rich patch of pearl-shell, that he alone knew of at Caillé Harbour, in which was a small fortune, and had looked so intently into her blue eyes, he had meant that it was for her. "Yes," and she smiled again, "I'm sure he loves me. But he's terribly slow; and although I do believe that blonde young widows look 'fetching' in black, I'm getting sick of it, and wish he'd marry me to-morrow."

Russell had stood to his compact with the dead skipper. The owners had given her £150, and Russell, making up a plausible story to his dead captain's wife of Liardet having in bygone days lent him "fifty pounds," had added that sum to the other. And he meant, for the sake of old Dave, never to let his pretty little widow run short as long as he had a shot in the locker. The patch of shell at Caillé he meant to work, and if Dave had lived they would have

"gone whacks." But as he was dead, he wouldn't do any mean thing. She should have half of whatever he got—"go whacks" just the same. But as for love, it never entered his honest brain, and had any one told him that Nell Liardet was fond of him, he would have called him a liar and "plugged" him for insulting a lady.

"Going away! Mr. Russell—Joe! Surely you won't go and leave me without a friend in the world? I thought you cared for me more than that?"

The big man reddened up to his temples.

"Don't say that, Mrs. Liardet. If you'll allow me, I'll always be a friend. And, as I thought it would be hard for you to have to spend the little that Liardet left you, I have made arrangements for you to draw a few pounds whenever you need it from the agents. And as long as ever I have a pound in the world, Dave Liardet's wife——"

"Wife!" and the blue eyes flashed angrily. "He is dead and I am free. Why do you always talk of him? I hate the name. I hated him—a coarse, money-loving——"

"Stop!"

Russell stepped forward. "Good-bye, Mrs. Liardet. I hold to what I have said. But the man that you call coarse and money-loving died in trying to make it for you. And he was a good, honest man, and I can't stay here and hear his memory abused by the woman he loved better than life." And then he turned to go, but stopped, and, with a scarlet face, said, "Of course you're a lady and wouldn't do anything not right and straight, so I know that a

you intend to marry again you'll send me word ; but if you don't, why, of course, I'll be proud and glad to stand by you in money matters. I'm sure poor Dave would have done the same for my wife if I had got that knife into me instead of him."

Nell Liardet, sitting with clenched hands and set teeth, said, in a hoarse voice, "Your wife ! Are you married ?"

"Well—er—yes, oh, yes. I have a—er—native wife at the Anchorites. Poor old Dave stood god-father to one of my little girls. God knows how anxious I am to get back to her."

"Good-bye, Mr. Russell !"

Kennedy the Boatsteerer.

STEERING north-west from Samoa for six or seven hundred miles you will sight the Ellice Group—low-lying, palm-clad coral atolls fringed on the lee with shimmering sandy beaches. On the weather-side, exposed to the long sweep of the ocean-rollers, there are but short, black-looking reefs backed by irregular piles of loose, flat, sea-worn coral, thrown up and accumulating till its surface is brushed by the pendant leaves of the cocoanuts, only to be washed and swirled back seawards when the wind comes from the westward and sends a fierce sweeping current along the white beaches and black coral rocks alike.

Twenty-three years ago these islands were almost unknown to any one save a few wandering traders and the ubiquitous New Bedford whaler. But now, long ere you can see from the ship's deck the snowy tumble of the surf on the reef, a huge white mass, grim, square, and ugly, will meet your eye—white-washed walls of a distressful ghastliness accentuated by doors and windows of the deadliest black. This cheerful excrescence on the face of suffering nature is a native church.

The people have mostly assimilated themselves, in their manners and mode of life generally, to the new order of things represented by the fearful-looking structure aforementioned. That is to say, even as the Tongan and Fijian, they have degenerated from a fierce, hardy, warlike race into white-shirted, black-coated saints, whose ideal of a lovely existence is to have public prayer twice a day on week-days and all day on Sundays. To them it is a good thing to get half a dollar from the white trader for a sick fowl—which, when bought, will be claimed by another native, who will have the white man fined two dollars for buying stolen property. Had the white man paid a dollar he had done wisely—that coin sometimes goes far in the Tokelaus. For instance, the truly unctuous native Christian may ask a dollar for two fowls, but he will also lease out his wife for a similar amount. Time was, in the Ellices, when the undue complaisance of a married woman meant a sudden and inartistic compression of the jugular, or a swift blow from the heavy, ebony-wood club of the wronged man. Nowadays, since the smug-faced native teacher hath shown them the Right Way, such domestic troubles are condoned by—a dollar. That is, if it be a genuine American dollar or two British florins; for outraged honour would not accept the cast-iron Bolivian money or the poor silver of Chili and Peru. And for a dollar the native "Christian" can all but pay for a nicely-bound Bible, printed in the Samoan tongue, and thus, no doubt, out of evil would come good; for he could, by means of his newly-acquired purchase, picture to his dusky mate the terrors that await those who look upon strange

men and *tupe fa'apupula* (bright and shining money).

But I want to tell about Kennedy. Kennedy the Boatsteerer he was called; although twenty years had passed and gone since that day at Wallis Island when he, a bright-eyed, bronze-faced lad—with the fighting-blood of the old Puritan Endicotts running like fire through his veins despite his New England bringing-up—ran his knife into a shipmate's heart and fled for ever from all white associations. Over a woman it was, and only a copper-coloured one at that; but then she was young and beautiful, with dreamy, glistening eyes, and black, wavy hair, ornamented with a wreath of orange-flowers and coil upon coil of bright-hued *seā seā* berries strung together, hanging from her neck and resting upon her dainty bosom.

Standing at the doorway of his house, looking over the placid waters at the rising sun, Kennedy folds his brawny arms across his bare, sun-tanned chest and mutters to himself, in his almost forgotten mother-tongue: "Twenty years, twenty years ago! Who would know me there now? Even if I placarded my name on my back and what I did, 'taint likely I'd have to face a grand jury for running a knife into a mongrel Portuguese, way out in the South Seas a score of years ago. . . . Poor little Talamālu! I paid a big price for her—twenty years of wandering from Wallis Island to the Bonins; and wherever I go that infernal story follows me up. Well, I'll risk it anyhow, and the first chance that comes along I'll cut

Kanaka life and drinking ship's rum and go see old dad and mum to home. Here, Tikenā, you Tokelau devil, bring me my toddy."

A native, clad in his grass *titi*, takes from a wooden peg in the house wall two shells of toddy, and the white wanderer takes one and drinks. He is about to return the other to the man when two girls come up from the beach with their arms around each other's waists, Tahiti fashion, and one calls out with a laugh to "leave some in the shell." This is Laumanu, and if there is one thing in the world that Jake Kennedy cares for above himself it is this tall girl with the soft eyes and lithe figure. And he dreams of her pretty often, and curses fluently to think that she is beyond his reach and is never likely to fill the place of Talamālu and her many successors. For Laumanu is *tabu* to a Nuitao chief—that is, she has been betrothed, but the Nuitao man is sixty miles away at his own island, and no one knows when he will claim his *avaga*. Then the girl gives him back the empty toddy-shell, and, slyly pinching his hand, sails away with her mate, whereupon the susceptible Kennedy, furious with long disappointment, flings himself down on his bed of mats, curses his luck and his unsuspecting rival at Nuitao, and finally decides not to spring a surprise on "dad and mum" by going "hum" for a considerable number of years to come.

Mr. Jake Kennedy at this time was again a widower—in the widest sense of the word. The last native girl who had occupied the proud position of *Te avaga te papalagi* (the white man's wife) was a native of the island of Maraki—a dark-skinned, passionately jealous

creature, who had followed his fortunes for three years to his present location, and then developed *mal-du-pays* to such an extent that the local priest and devil-catcher, one Pare-vaka, was sent for by her female attendants. Pare-vaka was not long in making his diagnosis. A little devil in the shape of an octopus was in Tenenapa's brain. And he gave instructions how to get the fiend out, and also further instructions to one of the girl attendants to fix, point-upwards, in the sick woman's mat the *foto*, or barb of the sting-ray. So when Kennedy, who, in his rough, careless way, had some faint fondness for the woman who three years ago he went mad over, heard a loud cry in the night and was told that Tenenapa was dead, he did not know that as the sick woman lay on her side the watchers had quietly turned her with her head to the roof, and with the needle pointed *foto* pierced her to the heart. And old Pare-vaka rejoiced, for he had a daughter who, in his opinion, should be *avaga* to the wealthy and clever white man, who could *tori nui* and *sisi atu* (pull cocoanuts and catch bonito) like any native; and this Tenenapa—who was she but a dog-eating stranger from Maraki only fit for shark's meat? So the people came and brought Kennedy the "gifts of affliction" to show their sympathy, and asked him to take a wife from their own people. And he asked for Laumanu.

There was a dead silence awhile, and then a wild-looking creature with long white hair falling around his shoulders like a cloak, dreading to shame the *papa-lagi* before so many, rose to his feet and motioned them away. Then he spoke: "Forget the words

you have said, and take for a wife the girl from the house of Pare-vaka. Laumanu is *tabu*, and death walks behind her." But Kennedy sulked and wanted Laumanu or none.

And this is why he feels so bad to-day, and the rum-keg gives him no consolation. For the sweet-voiced Laumanu always runs away from him when he steps out from his dark little trade-room into the light, with unsteady steps and a peculiar gleam in his black eye, that means mischief—rude love to a woman and challenge to fight to a man.

Lying there on his mat, plotting how to get possession of the girl, there comes to him a faint cry, gradually swelling in volume until every voice in the village, from the full, sonorous tones of the men to the shrill treble of the children, blend together: "*Te vaka motu! Te vaka motu!*" (a ship! a ship!). Springing up, he strides out, and there, slowly lumbering round the south-west end of the little island, under cruising canvas only, he sees her. One quick glance shows her to be a whaler.

In ten minutes Kennedy is in a canoe, flying over the reef, and in as many more alongside and on deck. The captain is an old acquaintance, and while the boats are sent ashore to buy pigs and poultry, Kennedy and he have a long talk in the cabin. Then the skipper says, as he rises, "Well, it's risky, but it's a smart way of earning five hundred dollars, and I'll land you and the creature somewhere in the Carolines."

The whaler was to lie off and on all night, or until such time as Kennedy and the girl came aboard in a canoe. To avert suspicion, the captain was to remain

ashore with his boat's crew to witness a dance, and, if all went well, the white man was to be aboard before him with Laumanu and stow her away, in case any canoes came off with the boat.

The dance was in full swing when Kennedy, stripped to the waist, with a heavy bag of money in his left hand and a knife in his right, took a long farewell of his house and stepped out into the silent groves of coco-palms. A short walk brought him to a salt lagoon. On the brink he stood and waited, until a trembling, voiceless figure joined him from out the depths of the thick mangroves. Hand-in-hand they fled along the narrow, sandy path till they reached the beach, just where a few untenanted thatched huts stood on the shingle. Between these, covered over with cocoanut branches, lay a canoe. Deftly the two raised the light craft and carried it down to the water that broke in tender, rippling murmurs on the white sand. And with Laumanu seated for'ard, gazing out beyond into the blackness before them, he urged the canoe seawards with quick, nervous strokes. Far away to the westward he could see the dull glimmer of the whaleship's lights.

The mate of the *Essex* was leaning over the rail, drowsily watching the phosphorescence in the water as the ship rolled gently to the ocean swell, when a cry came from for'ard: "A heavy squall coming down, sir, from the land!" And it did come, with a swift, fierce rush, and so strong that it nearly threw the old whaler over on her beam-ends. In the midst of the hum and roar of the squall some one in the waist

of the ship called out something about a canoe being alongside. The mate's comment was brief but vigorous, and the matter was speedily forgotten. Then the rain fell in torrents, and as the ship was made snug the watch got under shelter and the mate went below to get a drink of rum, and curse his captain for loafing ashore, watching naked women dancing.

Three miles further out a canoe was drifting and tossing about with outrigger carried away. Now and then, as a big sea lifted her, the stern would rise high out of the water and the sharp-nosed whaleback for'ard go down as if weighted heavily. And it was—with a bag of dollars lashed underneath. When in the early morning the whaleship sighted the drifting speck, floating on the bosom of a now placid sea, the thoughtful Down-East skipper—observant of the canoe's bows being under water—lowered a boat and pulled over to it. He took the bag of dollars and muttering something about "rather thinking he was kinder acquainted with the poor man's people," went back to the ship and stood away on his course in pursuit of his greasy vocation.

And Kennedy and the girl! Go some night and watch the dark-skinned people catching flying-fish by the light of *au lama* torches. Look over the side of the canoe and see those swarms of grim, grey devils of the tropic seas that ever and anon dart to the surface as the paddlers' hands come perilously near the water, and wonder no longer as to the fate of Kennedy the Boatsteerer and his Laumanu.

A Dead Loss.

DENISON, the supercargo of the *Indiana*, was sent by his "owners" to an island in the S.W. Pacific where they had a trading business, the man in charge of which had, it was believed, got into trouble by shooting a native. His instructions were to investigate the rumour, and, if the business was suffering in any way, to take away the trader and put another man in his place. The incident here related is well within the memory of some very worthy men who still dwell under the roofs of thatch in the Western Pacific.

The name of the island was—well, say Nukupapau. The *Indiana* sailed from Auckland in December, and made a smart run till the blue peaks of Tutuila were sighted, when the trades failed and heavy weather came on from the westward. Up to this time Denison's duties as supercargo had kept him busy in the trade-room, and he had had no time to study his new captain, for, although they met at table three times a day, beyond a few civilities they had done no talking. Captain Chaplin was young—about thirty—and one of the most taciturn persons Denison had ever met. The mate, who, having served the owners for about

twenty years, felt himself privileged, one night at supper asked him point-blank, in his Irish fashion *apropos* of nothing: "An' phwat part av the wurruld may yez come from, captain?"

There were but the five of them present—the skipper, two mates, boatswain, and Denison. Laying down his knife and fork and stirring his tea, he fixed his eyes coldly on the inquisitive sub's face.

"From the same God-forsaken hole as you do, sir—Ireland. My name isn't Chaplin, but as I'm the captain of this rotten old hooker I want you to understand that if you ask me another such d——d impertinent question you'll find it a risky business for you—or any one else!"

The quick blood mounted up to the old mate's forehead, and it looked like as if a fight was coming, but the captain had resumed his supper and the matter ended. But it showed us that he meant to keep to himself.

The *Indiana* made the low-lying atoll at last and lay-to outside. Those on board could see the trader's house close to, but instead of being surrounded by a swarm of eager and excited natives there was not one to be seen. Nor could they even see a canoe coming off. Denison pointed this out to the captain. Although of an evidently savage and morose temperament he was always pleasant enough to Denison in his capacity of supercargo, and inquired of him if he thought the trader had been killed.

"No," Denison said, "I don't think the people here would ever kill Martin; but something is wrong. He has not hoisted his flag, and that is very queer. I

can see no natives about his place—which also is curious, and the village just there seems to be deserted. If you will lower the boat I'll soon see what's wrong."

The skipper called out to lower the whaleboat, put four Rotumah boys in her, and then offered to accompany the supercargo. As he was a new man, Denison naturally was surprised at his wanting to leave his ship at a strange place.

"Glad enough," he said, "the landing here is beastly—lucky if we escape getting stove-in going over the reef. Martin knows the passage well and tackles it in any surf—wish he were here now!"

Captain Chaplin soon took that off his mind. Unconsciously Denison gave him the steer-oar, and in a few minutes they were flying over the reef at a half-tide, and never touched anywhere.

"Why," said Denison, "you seem to know the place."

"I do," he answered, quietly, "know it well, and know Martin, too. You'll find him drunk."

They walked up the white path of broken coral and stood in the doorway of the big front room. At the far end, on a native sofa, lay Martin; by his side sat a young native girl fanning him. No one else.

The gaunt black-whiskered trader tried to rise, but with a varied string of oaths lashed together he fell back, waving his hand to Denison in recognition. The girl was not a native of the island—that could be seen at a glance. She was as handsome as a picture, and after giving the two white men a dignified greeting, in the Yap (Caroline Islands) dialect, she resumed her fanning and smoking her cigarette.

"Martin," said the supercargo, "shake yourself together. What is the matter? Are you sick, or is it only the usual drunk?"

"Both," came in tones that sounded as if his inside were lined with cotton wool; "got a knife in my ribs six months back; never got well; and I've been drinking all the time"—and then, with a silly smile of childish vanity, "all over *her*. She's my new girl—wot d'ye think of her? Ain't she a star?"

All this time Chaplin stood back until Denison called him up and said to the trader, "Our new captain, Martin!"

"By God," said the trader, slowly, "if he ain't the image of that — nigger-catching skipper that was here from Honolulu four years ago."

"That's me!" said Chaplin, coolly puffing away at his cigar, and taking a seat near the sofa, with one swift glance of admiration at the face of the girl.

In a few minutes Martin told his troubles. Some seven months previously a ship had called at the island. He boarded her. She was a whaler making south to the Kermadecs "sperming." The captain told Martin he had come through the Pelews and picked up a big canoe with a chief's retinue on board, nearly dead from starvation. Many of them did die on board. Among those left were two women, the wife and daughter of the chief—who was the first to die. Making a long story short, Martin gave the captain trade and cash to the tune of five hundred dollars for the two women, and came ashore. Pensioning off his other wife, he took the young girl himself and sold the mother to the local chief for a ton of copra.

A week afterwards a young native came outside his house, cutlass in hand. He was a brother of the dismissed wife and meant fighting. Martin darted out, his new love standing calmly in the doorway, smoking. There was a shot, and the native fell with a bullet through his chest, but raising his voice he called to others and flung them his cutlass; and then Martin found himself struggling with two or three more and got a fearful stab. That night the head men of the village came to him and said that as he had always been a good man to them they would not kill him, but they then and there tabooed him till he either killed his new wife or sent her away. And when he looked out in the morning he saw the whole village going away in canoes to the other side of the lagoon. For six months neither he nor the girl—Lunumala was her name—had spoken to a native. And Martin gave himself up to love and drink, and, since the *fracas*, had not done a cent's worth of trading.

Denison told Martin his instructions. He only nodded, and said something to the girl, who rose and brought the supercargo his books. A few minutes' looking through them, and then at his well-filled trade-room, showed Denison that everything was right, except that all the liquor was gone.

"Martin," the supercargo said, "this won't do. I've got another man aboard, and I'll put him here and take you to Rotumah."

But he swore violently. He couldn't go anywhere else. This island was his home. The natives would give in some day. He'd rather cut his throat than leave.

"Well," said Denison, calmly, "it's one of two

things. You know as well as I do that a *tabu* like this is a serious business. I know you are the best man for the place; but, if you won't leave, why not send the girl away?"

No, he wouldn't send her away. She should stay too.

"All serene," said the man of business. "Then I'll take stock at once, and we'll square up and I'll land the other man."

This was a crusher for poor Martin. Denison felt sorry for him, and had a hard duty to carry through.

Presently the sick man with a ten-ton oath groaned, "— you, Mister Skipper, wot are you a-doin' of there, squeezin' my wife's hand?"

"Well, now," said the captain, quietly, "look here, Martin. Just put this in your thick head and think it out in five minutes. You've either got to give up this girl or get away from the island. Now, I don't want to make any man feel mean, but she don't particularly care about you, and—"

The graceful creature nodded her approval of Chaplin's remarks, and Martin glared at her. Then he took a drink of gin and meditated.

Two minutes passed. Then Martin turned.

"How much?" he said.

"Fifty pounds, sonny. Two hundred and fifty dollars."

"Easy to see you've been in the business," mumbled Martin; "why, her mother's worth that. 'Tain't no deal."

"Well, then, how much *do* you want?"

"A hundred."

"Haven't got it on board, sonny. Take eighty sovereigns and the rest in trade or liquor?"

"It's a deal," said Martin; "are you game to part ten sovereigns for the girl's mother, and I'll get her back from the natives!"

"No," said Chaplin, rising; "the girl's enough for me."

She had risen and was looking at Martin with a pallid face and set teeth, and then without a word of farewell on either side she picked up a Panama hat and, fan in hand, walked down to the boat and got in, waiting for Chaplin.

Presently he came down, and said, "Well, Mr. Denison, I suppose, as matters are arranged, you'll want to land Martin some trade?"

"Oh, no," said Denison, "he's got plenty. This *tabu* on his own business will teach him a lesson. But I want to send him some provisions on shore. By the way, captain, that girl's likely to prove expensive to you. I hope you'll put her ashore at Rotumah till the voyage is nearly over."

"No," said he, "I won't. Of course, I know our godly owners would raise a deuce of a row about my buying the girl if I couldn't pay for her keep while she's on board, but I've got a couple of hundred pounds in Auckland, as they know, besides some cash on board. After I've paid that thundering blackguard I've still some left, and I mean to put her ashore at Levuka to live until I can take her to her destination."

"Why," Denison queried, "what are you going to do with her?"

"Just this: there's a friend of mine in Honolulu

always willing to give a few thousand dollars for a really handsome girl. And I believe that girl will bring me nearly about three thousand dollars."

For three months the girl remained on board, grave, dignified, and always self-possessed. Chaplin treated her kindly, and it was evident to all on board that the girl had given him such affection as she was capable of, and little knew his intentions regarding her future. With both Chaplin and Denison she would now converse freely in the Pelew Island dialect. And often pointing to the sinking sun she would sigh—"There is my land over there behind the sun. When will we get there?" Laying her hand on Chaplin's she would seek for an answer. And he would answer—nothing.

After the *Indiana* had cruised through the Line Islands she headed back for Rotumah and Fiji. The girl came up on deck after supper. It was blowing freshly and the barque was slipping through the water fast. Lunumala walked to the binnacle and looked at the compass, pointing to S.S.W. She gazed steadily at it awhile and then said to the Rotumah boy in his own tongue—"Why is the ship going to the South?"

Tom, the Rotuman, grinned—"To Fiji, my white tropic bird."

Just then Chaplin came on deck, cigar in mouth. The girl and he looked at each other. He knew by her white, set face that mischief was brewing.

Pointing, with her left hand, to the compass, she said, in a low voice—

"To Fiji?"

"Yes," said Chaplin, coolly, "to Fiji, where you must remain awhile, Lunumala."

"And you?"

"That is my business. Question me no more now. Go below and turn in."

Standing there before him, she looked again in his hard, unrelenting face. Then she slowly walked forward.

"Sulky," said Chaplin to Denison.

Steadily she walked along the deck, and then mounted to the to'gallant fo'c's'le and stood a second or two by the cathead. Her white dress flapped and clung to her slender figure as she turned and looked aft at us, and her long, black hair streamed out like a pall of death. Suddenly she sprang over.

With a curse Chaplin rushed to the wheel, and in double-quick time the whaleboat was lowered and search was made. In half an hour Chaplin returned, and gaining the deck said, in his usual cool way, to the mate: "Hoist in the boat and fill away again as quick as possible." Then he went below.

A few minutes afterwards he was at his accustomed amusement, making tortoise-shell ornaments with a fret-saw.

"A sad end to the poor girl's life," said the supercargo.

"Yes," said the methodical ex-Honolulu black-bird, "and a sad end to my lovely five hundred dollars."

Hickson : a Half-Caste.

"MAUKI" HICKSON and I were coming across from the big native town at Mulinu'u Point to Apia one afternoon when we met a dainty little white woman, garmented in spotless white. Hickson, touching his hat, walked on across the narrow bridge that crosses the creek by the French Mission, and waited for me on the other side.

This tiny lady in white was a lovable little creature. There was not a man in Samoa but felt proud and pleased if she stopped and spoke to him. And she could go anywhere on the beach, from respectable Matautu right down to riotous, dissolute Matafele, and make her purchases at the big store of Der Deutsche Handels Plantagen und Süd See Inseln Gesellschaft without even a drunken native daring to look at her. That was because every one, dissolute native and licentious white, knew she was a good woman. Perhaps, had she been married, and had she had a yellow, tallowy skin and the generally acidulated appearance peculiar to white women long resident in the South Seas, we wouldn't have thought so much of her, and felt mean and contemptible when she taxed us in her open, innocent fashion with doing those

things that we ought not have done. But she had a sweet, merry little face, set about with dimples, and soft cheeks hued like the first flush of a ripening peach ; and when she spoke to us she brought back memories of other faces like hers—far-away faces that most of us would have liked to have seen again.

Just by the low stone wall, that in those days came close down to the creek, the little lady stood under the shade of some cocoanuts, and spoke to me.

"Who is that horrible, sulky-looking half-caste?" she said, jerking her sunshade towards my late companion.

"That is Hickson, Miss Milly," I said—a very decent, steady fellow, with a white man's heart.

"Decent! steady! and with a white man's heart!" and Miss Milly's pink-and-white cheeks reddened angrily. "How I hate that expression! No wonder all sorts of horrible things happen in these dreadful islands when white men will walk down the road with a cruel, remorseless wretch like Hickson—the man that murdered his sister."

"You should not say that, Miss Milly," I said. "Of course that is the common report, spread about by the captain of the German brig ——. But that is because Hickson nearly killed him for calling him a nigger. And you must remember, Miss Milly, that I was there at the time. Hickson was our second mate. His sister was killed, but it is a cruel thing to accuse him of murdering her; he was very fond of her."

"Oh dear! I am so glad to hear some one say it isn't true," and the bright eyes filled. "They say, too, she was such a pretty little thing. How ever did

she get to such a terrible place as Ponape? Come up and see uncle and me before you go away again. Good-bye now, I'm going to buy a water-bag at Goddeffroy's."

I think that Hickson must have guessed that he had formed the subject of the conversation between the little lady and myself, for after we had walked on a bit he said, suddenly—

"I think I'll go aboard the *Menchikoff* and ship; she wants some hands, and I would like to clear out of this. Except two or three that have known me for a long time, like yourself, every one looks crooked at me."

"I think you are right, Hickson, in going away. Samoa is a bad place for an idle man. But won't you come another trip with us? The old man¹ thinks a lot of you, and there's always a second mate's berth for you with him."

Hickson's eyes flashed fire. "No! I'd as lief go to hell as ship again with a man that once put me in irons, and disgraced me before a lot of Kanakas. I've got White Blood enough in me to make me remember that. "Good-bye," and he shook hands with me; "I'll wait here till the *Menchikoff's* boat comes ashore and go off and see Bannister."

Poor Hickson. He was proud of his White Blood, and the incident he alluded to was a bitter memory to him. Could he ever forget it? I never could, and thought of it as I was being pulled off on board.

It was at Jakoits Harbour—in Ponape—that it

¹ The "old man," i.e., the captain.

happened. Hickson and I were going ashore in the long boat to buy a load of yams for our native crew, when he began to tell me something of his former life.

His had been a strange and chequered career, and in his wanderings as a trader and as a boatsteerer in a Hobart Town whaler, he had traversed every league of the wide Pacific. With his father and two sisters he had, till a few years or so before he joined us, been trading at Yap, in the Western Carolines. Here the wandering old white man had died. Of his two sisters, one, the eldest, had perished with her sailor husband by the capsizing of a schooner which he commanded. The youngest, then about nine years old, was taken care of by the captain of a whaler that touched at Yap, until he placed her in charge of the then newly-founded American Mission at Ponape, and in the same ship Hickson went on his wanderings again, joining us at Tahiti. And I could see as he talked to me that he had a deep affection for her.

"What part of Ponape is she living on?" I asked.

"I don't know, I'm sure. Here, I suppose; and if you don't mind, while you're weighing the yams, I'll go up to the mission-house and inquire."

"Right you are, Hickson," I said, "but don't forget to get back early, it's a beastly risky pull out to the ship in the dark."

We went into a little bay, and found the natives waiting for us with the yams, and Hickson, after inquiring the way to the Mission, left me.

Ponape in those days was a rough place. It was the rendezvous of the American whaling fleet, that

came there for wood and water and "other supplies," before they sailed northward along the grim coasts of Japan and Tchantar Bay to the whale grounds of the Arctic Seas.

And sometimes there would be trouble over the "other supplies" among the savagely licentious crews of mixed men of all nations, and knives would flash, and the white sand of the beaches be stuck together in places with patches and clots of dull red. It was the whalers' paradise — a paradise of the loveliest tropical beauty, of palm-shaded beach and verdure-clad mountain imaginable; a paradise of wonderfully beautiful and utterly, hopelessly immoral native women; and, lastly, a paradise of cheap native grog, as potent and fiery as if Hell had been boiled down and concentrated into a small half-pint.

It was dark, and the yams had all been brought and stored in the boat before Hickson returned. By the flickering light of a native fire in a house close by I could see that something was the matter with him. His face was drawn, and his black eyes gleamed out like dully burning coals from the thick wavy hair that fell about his temples.

"I'm sorry I'm late," he said, and the moment he had spoken I knew by the dangerous huskiness of his voice that he had been drinking the native grog.

Staggering into the boat, he sat down beside me and took the tiller.

"Give way, *fanau seoli* (children of hell)," he growled to our crew of Samoans and Rotumah boys, "let us get these yams aboard, and then I'm coming back to burn the — mission-house down."

Slowly the heavily-laden boat got way on her, and we slid away from the light of the native fire out into the inky blackness of night. Beyond a muttered curse at the crew, and keeping up that horrible grinding of the teeth common enough to men of violent passions when under great excitement, Hickson said nothing further till I asked—

"Hickson, what's the matter? Couldn't you find your sister?"

He sat up straight, and gripping my knee in his left hand till I winced, said, with an awful preliminary burst of blasphemy—

"By God, sir, she's gone to hell; I'll never see poor little Kätia again. I'm not drunk, don't you think it. I did have a stiff pull of grog up in the village there, but I'm not drunk; but there's something running round and round in my head that's drivin' me mad."

"Where is she?" I asked.

"God knows. I went to the mission-house and asked for the white missionary. The —— dog wasn't there. He and his wife are away in Honolulu, on a dollar-cadging trip. There was about three or four of them cursed native teachers in the house, and all I could get out of them was that Kätia wasn't there now; went away a year ago. 'Where to?' I said to one fat pig, with a white shirt and no pants on him. 'Don't know,' says he, in the Ponape lingo; 'she's a bad girl now, and has left us holy ones of God and gone to the whaleships.'"

Coming from any other man but Hickson I could have laughed at this, so truly characteristic of the repellent, canting native missionary of Micronesia,

but the quick, gasping breath of Hickson and his trembling hand showed me how he suffered.

"I grabbed him and choked him till he was near dead, and chucked him in a heap outside. Then I went all round to the other houses, but every one ran away from me. I got a swig of grog from a native house and came right back." Then he was silent, and fixed his eyes on the ship's lights seaward.

I could not offer him any sympathy, so said nothing. Lighting our pipes we gazed out ahead. Far away, nearest the reef, lay our brig, her riding light just discernible. A mile or two further away were three or four American whalers, whose black hulls we could just make out through the darkness. Within five hundred yards of us lay a dismantled and condemned brig, the *Kamehameha IV.*, from whose stern ports came a flood of light and the sounds of women's voices.

We were just about abeam of her when Hickson suddenly exclaimed—

"Why, sir, the boat is sinking. Pull hard, boys, pull for the brig. The water's coming in wholesale over the gunwale. Hadn't you fellows enough sense to leave a place to bale from?" and he slewed the boat's head for the brig.

She had two boats astern. We were just in time to get alongside one and pitch about two tons of yams into her, or we would have sunk.

The noise we made was heard on the brig, and a head was put out of one of the ports, and a voice hailed us. This was the brig's owner and captain, W——.

"Come on board and have a cigar!" he called out.

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Leaving the crew to bale out and re-ship the yams, we clambered on deck.

Now, this brig and her captain had a curious history. She was, two years before, as well-found a whaleship as ever sailed the Pacific, but by some extraordinary ill-luck she had never taken a fish during a cruise of seven months, although in the company of others that were doing well. The master, one of those fanatically religious New Englanders that by some strange irony of fate may be often met with commanding vilely licentious crews of whaleships, was a skilled and hitherto lucky man. On reaching Ponape the whole of his officers and crew deserted *en masse*, and went off in other ships. Utterly helpless, W—— was left by himself. There were, of course, plenty of men to be had in Ponape, but the ship's reputation for bad luck damned his hopes of getting a fresh crew.

Whether the man's brain was affected by his troubles I know not, but after living like a hermit for a year, alone on the brig, a sudden change took place in his character and conduct. Sculling ashore in one of his boats—she was a four-boat ship—he had an interview with Nanakin, the chief of the Jakoit's district, and returned on board with five or six young girls, to whom he gave permanent quarters on board, selling from time to time his sails, whaling gear, and trade to keep his harem in luxury. At the end of a year the brig was pretty well stripped of all of any value; and W—— went utterly, hopelessly mad.

The brig's cabin was large and roomy. The table

that had once nearly filled it had been taken away, and the floor covered with those peculiarly made Ponape mats which, by rolling up one-half of either end, forms a combined couch and pillow. As Hickson and I, following the crazy little captain, made our appearance, some four young girls, who were lolling about on the mats, started up, and looked at us with big, wondering eyes, ablaze with curiosity.

Both Hickson and myself—and he had roved throughout Polynēsia from his boyhood—were struck by the extraordinary beauty of these four young creatures; so young and innocent in looks; in sin, as old as Ninon d'Enclos.

Placing one hand on the shoulder of the girl nearest to him, and fixing his big, blue, deep-set eyes on us, W—— waved the other towards the girls, and said—

“Welcome, gentlemen, welcome. Behold these little devils, who in the guise of sunburnt angels are the solace of a man forgotten by his God, and the father of a family residing in Martha's Vineyard, United States of America.”

Then he gave us each a cigar and told us to be seated while he got us a glass of New England rum.

Hickson, with a contemptuous smile, sat with folded arms on a short, heavy stool. One of the girls, unshipping one of the two lights from the hook on which it hung, followed W—— into a state-room to get the rum. Presently we heard them coming out, W—— carrying a wickerwork-covered five-gallon jar; but two girls came out instead of one. The stranger kept close to W——, one hand holding the sleeve of his shirt.

Stooping as he set the jar on the floor, I had a good view of the new-comer, and a deadly fear seized me. I knew at once that she was Hickson's sister ! He was coarse and rough-looking, but yet a handsome man, and this girl's likeness to him was very striking. Just then Hickson, not even noticing her, rose and said he was going on deck to see if the boat was ready, when the strange quavering tones of W—— arrested him.

"Be seated, sir, for another minute. Nijilon, get some glasses. You see here, gentlemen, the fairest and choicest of all my devil-vestals, one that——"

Hickson looked at her, and with a terrified wail the girl clutched W——'s arm, and placed her face against his breast. With lips drawn back from his white teeth the half-caste sprang up, and his two clenched hands pawed the air. Then from his throat there came a sound like a laugh strangled into a groan.

Scarce knowing what I did I got in front of him. He dashed me aside as if I were a child, and seized the stool. And as he swung it round above his head the girl raised a face like the hue of death to his ; then the blow fell, and she and W—— went down together.

Hickson rushed on deck and tried to spring overboard. I think he must have struck the main boom, for one of our crew who was on deck heard him fall. We got a light, and found him lying senseless. Two of the "vestals" held him up while I went below for some rum and water. W—— was lying where he had fallen, breathing heavily, but not seriously injured as far as I could see. But one look at the closed eyes of

the girl told me she was past all help. The heavy stool had struck her on the temple.

Placing Hickson in the boat with two men to mind him, I took the other two with me into the cabin of the brig. W—— was seated on the floor, held up by two of his harem, and muttering unintelligibly to himself. The other two were bending over the figure on the floor, and placing their hands on her bosom.

"Come away from here, L——," said Harry, one of our Rotumah boys, to me; "if the Ponape men come off, they will kill us all."

We could do nothing, so we got back into the boat, and with the still senseless body of Hickson lying at our feet, pulled out to the ship.

When he came to he was a madman, and for his own safety our captain put him in irons. We put to sea next day, our skipper, like a wise man, saying it would go hard with us if W—— died, and four Yankee whalers in port.

The day after we got away Hickson was set at liberty, and went about his duties as usual. At nightfall I went into his deck cabin. He was lying in his bunk, in the dark, smoking. He put out his hand, and drew me close up to him.

"Harry says she is dead?"

"Yes," I whispered.

"Poor little Kätia; I never meant to hurt her. But I am glad she is dead."

And he smoked his pipe in silence.

A Boating Party of Two.

THE prison gate opened, and Number 73 for a minute or so leaned against the wall to steady himself. The strange clamour of the streets smote upon his ear like dagger strokes into his heart, and his breath came in quick, short gasps.

Some one was speaking to him—a little, pale-faced, red-whiskered man with watery eyes—and Challoner, once "Number 73," staring stupidly at him, tried to understand, but failed. Then, sidling up to him, the little man took one of Challoner's gaunt and long hands between his own, and a stout, masculine female in a blue dress and poke bonnet and spectacles clasped the other and called him "brother."

A dull gleam shone in his sullen eyes at last, and drawing his hands away from them, he asked—

"Who are you?"

The stout woman's sharp tongue clattered, and Challoner listened stolidly. Sometimes a word or two in the volley she fired would cause him to shake his head wearily—"happiness in the life heternal," "washed in the blood of the Lamb," and "cast yer sins away an' come an' be saved without money an' without price."

Then he remembered who he was and who they were—the warders had told him of the Prison Gate Brigade. He turned to the man and muttered—

“I want to get away from here,” and stepped past them, but the woman laid her fat, coarse hand on his sleeve.

“Come 'ome with us, brother. P'raps yer 'ave a mother or a wife waitin' to 'ear from yer, an' we——”

He dashed her hand aside savagely—“Blast you, no; let me go!”

Then with awkward, shambling gait he pushed through the curious crowd at the prison gate, crossed the street, and entered the nearest public-house.

“Another soul escaped us, Sister Hannah,” squeaked the little man; “but we'll try and rescue him when he comes out from the house of wickedness and abomination.”

“Better leave him alone,” said a warder in plain clothes, who just then came through the gate, “he won't be saved at no price, I can tell yer.”

“Who is the poor man?” asked Sister Hannah, in a plaintive, injured voice.

“Sh! Mustn't ask them questions,” said the little man.

But he knew, all the same, that the tall, gaunt man with the sallow face and close-cropped white hair was Harvey Challoner, once chief officer of the ship *Victory*, sentenced in Melbourne to imprisonment for life for manslaughter, but released at the end of ten years.

The *Victory* murder trial had not attracted much public attention, and the prisoner had been defended

at the public expense. On the voyage from London to Australia the crew had become discontented. They had reason for their discontent. Captain Cressingham, for all his suave, gentlemanly shore manners, was an adept at "hazing," and was proud of the distinction of making every ship he commanded a hell to the fo'c's'le hands. Sometimes, with sneering, mocking tongue, he would compliment Challoner upon the courteous manner in which he "addressed the gentlemen for'ard." As for the other two mates, they were equally as brutal as their captain, but lacked his savage, methodical vindictiveness.

When only a few weeks out, Harman, the second mate, one day accused one of the men of "soldiering," and striking him in the face, broke his nose, and as the man lay on the deck he kicked him brutally. Challoner, who was on deck at the time, jumped down off the poop, and seizing Harman by the arm, called him a cowardly hound.

"And you're a d——d old woman," was the retort.

Challoner's passion overpowered him, and at the end of five minutes Harman was carried below badly knocked about, and a stormy scene ensued between Challoner and the captain.

"You have all but killed Mr. Harman. I could, and should, put you in irons for the rest of the voyage," the captain had said.

There was a steely glitter in the mate's dark eyes as he answered—

"In dealing with ruffians such as Harman and yourself one doesn't stop at an extra blow or two."

From that time Cressingham was his bitter enemy; but Challoner did his duty as chief officer

too faithfully to give the captain a chance against him.

Day after day had passed. The sullen discontent of the crew had changed into outspoken hatred and a thirst for revenge upon the captain and Harman and Barton—the latter the third mate—and Challoner, who knew what was brewing, dared not open his mouth to any one of the three upon the subject. Between himself and Cressingham and the other two there had now sprung up a silent yet fierce antagonism, which the crew were quick to perceive, and from which they augured favourably for themselves.

One night, just as Challoner had relieved the second mate, some of the hands from both watches marched boldly aft and asked him if he would take command of the ship. He had only to say the word, they said. They were tired of being “bashed” and starved to death by the skipper and two mates, and if he would navigate the ship to Melbourne they would keep him free from interference, and take the consequences, &c.

“Go for’ard, you fools,” said Challoner, with assumed harshness, “don’t talk mutiny to me.”

A step sounded on the deck behind him, and Cressingham’s sneering tones were heard.

“Discussing mutiny, are you, Mr. Challoner? By God, sir, I’ve suspected you long enough. Go below, sir; or go for’ard with these fellows. You’ll do no more mate’s duty aboard of this ship. Ah, Colliss, you’re one of the ringleaders, are you?” And in an instant he seized a seaman by the throat, and called loudly for Barton and Harman to help him.

Before they could respond to his call the poop was

black with struggling men. Cressingham, mad with passion, had Colliss down trying to strangle him, and Challoner, fearing murder would be done, had thrown himself upon the captain and tried to make him release his grip of the man's throat. At that moment a sailor called out—

"Stand by, chaps, for Barton and Harman, and drop 'em the moment they shows up. Mr. Challoner's got the old man safe."

But Messrs. Harman and Barton were tough customers. The loud cries on deck and heavy tramping of feet told them that a crisis had occurred, and they dashed up, each with a revolver in hand—only to be felled from behind ere they could fire a shot. Challoner, letting the captain free, sprang to their aid. But he came too late, for before, with blows, kicks, and curses, he could force his way through the swaying, surging mass of men that hid the fallen officers from his view, he heard a sound—the sound of a man's skull as it was smashed in by a heavy blow.

"He's done for," said a voice, with a savage laugh, "scoot, chaps, scoot. This shindy will keep the old man quiet a bit, now one of his fightin' cocks is gone," and the men tumbled down off the poop as quick as their legs could carry them, leaving Challoner and the two prone figures behind them. Cressingham had gone below for his revolver.

"Steward," called Challoner, "bring a light here, quick, and see where the captain is," and, stooping down, he tried to raise Harman, then laid him down with a shudder—his brains were scattered on the deck. Barton was alive, but unconscious.

As Challoner was about to rise, Captain Cressingham stood over him and raised his arm, and dealt him a crashing blow with a belaying pin. When he regained consciousness he was in irons.

A month later and he stood in the dock charged with murder. The principal witnesses against him were his captain and Barton, the third mate. The crew, who, of course, were also witnesses in the case, didn't worry much about him. It wasn't likely they would run their necks into a noose if it could be placed round any one else's. And in this instance—superinduced by a vision of the gallows—fo'c's'le hands stuck to one another and lied manfully together. None of them "had hurt Mr. Harman."

But it was upon Cressingham's evidence that his fate hung; and Cressingham, suave, handsome, and well-dressed, told the court how Challoner had once attempted to murder Harman in the earlier part of the voyage. Barton, with his arm in a sling, corroborated the lie with blunt cheerfulness.

His Honour summed up dead against the prisoner, and the jury, impressed by the calm, gentlemanly appearance of Captain Cressingham, and the haggard, unshaven, and guilty look of the man whose life they held in their hands, were not long in considering their verdict.

The prisoner was found guilty, but with a recommendation to mercy.

And then the judge, who was cross and tired, made a brief but affecting speech, and sentenced him to imprisonment for life.

He went into his prison cell with hair as black as

night, and came out again as white as a man of seventy.

In a back room of the public-house he sat and waited till he had courage and strength enough to face the streets again. And as he waited, he gave himself up to visions of the future—to the day when, with his hand on Cressingham's lying throat, he would see his face blacken and hear the rattling agonies of his gasps for breath. He leaned back in his chair and laughed hoarsely. The unearthly, hideous sound startled him, and he glanced round nervously as if he feared to betray his secret. Then he drank another glass of brandy, and with twenty-six shillings of prison money in his pocket and ten years of the blackest hatred in his heart, he went out again into the world to begin his search—for Cressingham and revenge.

II.

The people of Port —, on the east coast of New Zealand, were charmed with the handsome commander of the biggest ocean steamer that had yet visited the port, and on the eve of his departure gave Captain Cressingham the usual banquet. Banquets to captains of new lines of steamers are good things to boom the interests of a budding seaport town, and so a few score of the "warmest" men in the place cheerfully planked down their guinea each for the occasion.

The *Belted Will* had hauled out from the wharf and lay a mile or so from the shore ready for sea, and

the captain had told his chief officer to send a boat ashore for him at twelve o'clock.

Among the crowd that lounged about the entrance to the town hall and watched for the arrival of the guest of the evening was a tall, dark, rough-looking man with white curly hair. One or two of those present seemed to know him, and presently some one addressed him.

"Hallo, Harry! come to have a look at the swells? 'Taint often you come out o' nights."

The white-haired man nodded without speaking, and then moved away again. Presently the man he was looking for was driven up, and the loungers drew aside to let him pass up the steps into the blaze of light under the vestibule of the hall, where he was welcomed by half a dozen effusive citizens. For a moment he stood and chatted, and the man who watched clenched his brawny hands and ground his teeth. Then Captain Cressingham disappeared, and the tall man walked slowly away again in the direction of the wharves.

At eleven o'clock Cressingham's boat came ashore, and the crew as they made her fast grumbled and cursed in true sailor fashion.

"Are you the chaps from the *Belted Will*?" said a man, who was leaning against one of the wharf sheds.

"Yes; who are you, mister?" said one of them.

"I'm Harry—one of the hands that was stowing wool aboard. I heard you was coming ashore for the captain, and as you won't see him for the next couple of hours, I thought I'd come down and ask you to

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come up and have a couple of nips. It's cold loafing about here. I live pretty close."

"You're one o' the right sort. What say, Peter?"

Peter was only too glad. The prospect of getting into a warm house was enough inducement, even without the further bliss of a couple of nips.

In half an hour the two men were helplessly drunk in Harry's room, and their generous host carefully placing another bottle (not doctored this time) of rum on the table for them when they awoke, quietly went out and locked the door behind him. Then he walked quickly back to where the *Belted Will's* boat lay, and descending the steps, got into her and seemed to busy himself for a while. He soon found what he was looking for, and then came the sound of intrushing water. Then he drew the boat up again to the steps, got out, and casting off the painter, slung it aboard, and shoved her into the darkness.

For another hour he waited patiently, and then came the rattle of wheels, and loud voices and laughter, as a vehicle drew up at the deserted wharf.

"Why not stay ashore to-night, captain," said one of the guest's champagne-laden companions, "and tell your man to go back?"

"No, no," laughed Cressingham. "I don't like the look of the weather, and must get aboard right away. Boat ahoy! Where are you, men?"

"Your boat isn't here, sir," said a gruff voice, and a tall man advanced from the darkness of the sheds. "I saw the men up town, both pretty full, and heard them laughing and say they meant to have a night

ashore. It's my belief they turned her adrift purposely."

Cressingham cursed them savagely, and then turned to the tall man.

"Can you get me a boat?"

"Well, sir, there's a big heavy boat belonging to my boss that I can get, and I don't mind putting you aboard. We can sail out with this breeze in no time. She's lying under the coal-wharf."

"That'll do. Good-bye, gentlemen. I trust we shall all meet again in another eight months or so."

The big man led the way, and in a few minutes they reached the coal wharf, under which the boat was moored. She was a heavy, clumsily-built craft, and Cressingham, on getting aboard and striking a match, cursed her filthy state. The tall man stepped to the mast and hoisted the lug-sail, and Cressingham, taking the tiller, kept her out towards the *Belted Will*, whose riding light was discernible right ahead.

"We must look out for the buoys, sir," said the gruff-voiced man, as the breeze freshened up and the heavy boat quickened her speed.

"All right," said Cressingham, and pulling out a cigar from his overcoat he bent his head and struck a light.

Ere he raised it the white-haired man had sprung upon him like a tiger, and seized his throat in his brawny hands. For a minute or so Cressingham struggled in that deadly grip, and then lay limp and insensible in the bottom of the boat.

Challoner, with malignant joy, leaned over him with a world of hate in his black eyes, and then proceeded to business.

Lifting the unconscious man he carried him for'ard, and, placing him upon a thwart, gagged and bound him securely. Then he went aft and, taking the tiller, hauled the sheet in and kept the boat away again upon her course for the *Belted Will*.

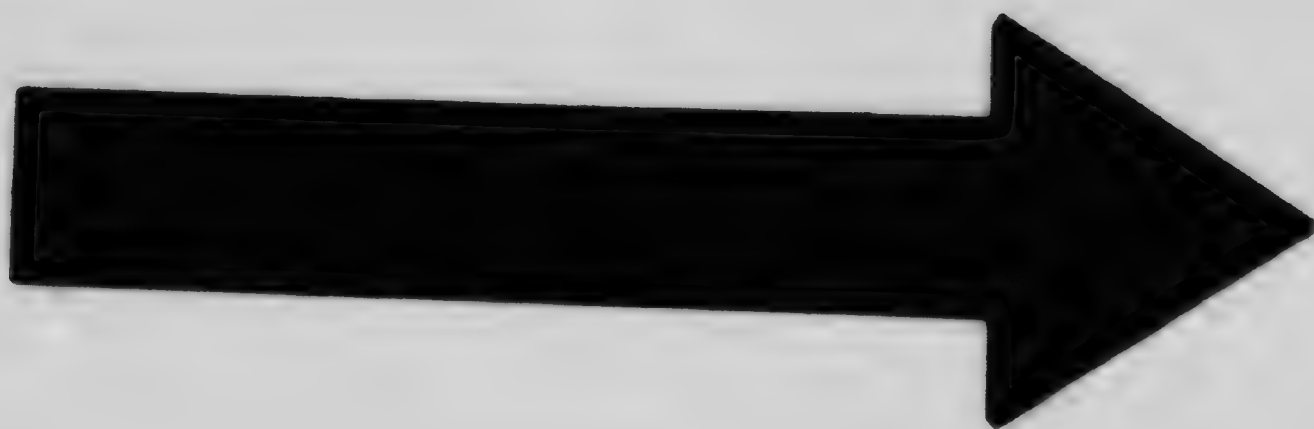
He passed within a quarter of a mile of the huge, black mass with the bright riding light shining upon the fore-stay, and the look-out from the steamer took no notice of the boat as she swept past toward the open sea.

Daylight at last. For six hours the boat had swept before the strong northerly wind, and the land lay nearly thirty miles astern, lost in a sombre bank of heavy clouds and mist. Challoner had taken off his rough overcoat and thrown it over the figure of his enemy. He did not want him to perish of cold. And as he steered he fixed his eyes, lighted up with an unholy joy, upon the bent and crushed figure before him.

Cressingham was conscious now, and stared with horror-filled eyes at the grim creature in the craft before him—a gaunt, dark-faced man, clad in a striped guernsey and thin cotton pants, with a worn and ragged woollen cap stuck upon his thick masses of white curly hair. Who was he? A madman.

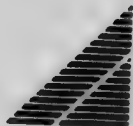
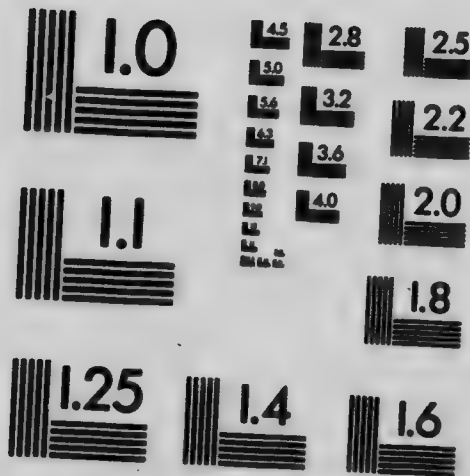
Challoner seemed to take no notice of him, and looked out upon the threatening aspect of sea and sky with an unconcerned face. Presently he hauled aft the sheet a bit, and kept the boat on a more westerly course, and the bound and wondering man on the for'ard thwart watched his movements intently.

The boat had made a little water, and the white-



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headed man stooped and baled it out carefully ; then he looked up and caught his prisoner's eye.

"Ha, ha, Cressingham, how are you? Isn't it delightful that we should meet again?"

A strange inarticulate cry broke from Cressingham.

"Who are you?"

"What! is it possible that you don't remember me? I am afraid that that banquet champagne has affected you a little. Try back, my dear fellow. Don't you remember the *Victory*?"

Ah! he remembered now, and a terrible fear chilled his life-blood and froze his once sneering tongue into silence.

"Ah! I see you do," and Challoner laughed with Satanic passion. "And so we meet again—with our positions reversed. Once, unless my memory fails me, you put me in irons. Now, Captain Cressingham, I have you seized up, and we can have a quiet little chat—all to ourselves."

No answer came from Cressingham. With dilated, horror-stricken eyes and panting breath he was turned into stone. The wretched man's silence at last broke up the depths of his maddened tormentor's hatred, and with a bound he sprang to his feet and raised his hand on high.

"Ah! God is good to me at last, Cressingham. For ten years I hungered and thirsted for the day that would set me free, free to search the world over for the lying, murderous dog that consigned me, an innocent man, to a lifelong death. And when the day came, sooner than I thought or you thought—for I suffered for ten years instead of for life—I waited, a free man till I got you into my power."

His hand fell to his side again, and then he leaned forward and laughed.

Cressingham, with death creeping into his heart, at last found his voice.

"Are you going to murder me?" he said.

"Yes," said Challoner, slowly, "I am going to murder you. But not quickly. There would be no joy in that. I want you to taste some of my hideous past—some little space, if only for a day or two, of that ten long years of agony I spent in Pentridge."

Then he sat down again, and opening the locker in the stern sheets, took out food and water, and placing it beside him, ate and drank. But he gave none to Cressingham.

He finished his meal, and then looked again at his prisoner, and spoke calmly again.

"You are comfortable, I trust, Captain Cressingham? Not cold, I am certain, for you have my overcoat in addition to your own. Do you know why I gave it to you? Just to keep you nice and warm during the night, and—alive. But, as I feel chilly myself now, I'll take it from you. Thanks," and he laughed mockingly as he leaned over and snatched it away.

"You see, sir, we are going on a long cruise—down to the Snares, perhaps—and I must keep warm myself, or else how can I talk to you to break the monotony of the voyage? . . . It is no use looking astern, my friend. There's only one tug in port, and she is not in sea-going trim, so we've got a good start of any search party. And as I don't want to die myself, we won't run away from the land altogether."

And so the day passed, agony and deadly fear

blanching the face of one, and cruel, murderous joy filling the heart of the other. Once, as the last dying gleams of the wintry sun for a few brief moments shone over the blackened waters, Challoner saw a long stream of steamer's smoke between the boat and the misty line of coast, and he lowered the sail and let the boat drift till darkness enwrapped them again.

Once more he took out food and water, and ate and drank, and then lit his pipe and smoked, and watched with eyes that glared with the lust of murder and revenge the motionless being before him.

Only once in all that night of horror to Cressingham did he speak, and his voice shook and quivered, and came in choking gasps.

"Challoner, for the love of Christ, kill me and end my misery."

"Ha! still alive, Captain Cressingham! That is very satisfactory—to me only, of course. Kill you, did you say?" and again his wild demoniac laugh pealed out through the black loneliness of the night. "No, I don't intend to kill you. I want to see you suffer and die by inches. I want you to call upon God to help you, so that I can mock at you, and defy Him to rob me of my vengeance."

A shuddering moan, and then silence again.

Again the day broke, and as the ocean mists cleared and rolled away, and the grey morning light fell upon the chilled and stiffening form of his enemy, Challoner came up and looked into his face, and spoke to him.

No answer came from his pallid lips, and Challoner thrust his hand under Cressingham's coat and felt his heart. He was still alive, and presently the closed and swollen eyelids opened, and as he met the glance of

the man who leaned over him an anguished groan burst from his heart.

Challoner looked at him intently for awhile ; then he hoisted the sail again, and, taking the tiller, headed the boat in for the land. The wind had hauled round during the night, and although the boat made a lot of leeway there was no danger now of being blown away from the land altogether.

As the sun mounted higher, and the grey outlines of the shores darkened, he glanced carefully over the sea to the north-west. Nothing in sight there. But as the boat lifted to a sea he saw about five miles to leeward that a big steamer was coming up. In half an hour, unless she changed her course, she would be up to the boat and could not fail to see her.

In five minutes more Cressingham lay in the bottom of the boat unbound, but dying fast, and Challoner was speaking to him.

"Cressingham, you are dying. You know that, don't you ? And you know that I am not lying when I tell you that there is a steamer within five miles of us. In less than half an hour she will be up to us."

One black, swollen hand was raised feebly, and then fell back, and a hoarse sound came from his throat.

"Well, now listen. I said I wanted to see you die—die as you are dying now—with my face over yours, watching you die. And you die and I live. I can live now, Cressingham, and perhaps the memory of those ten years of death in life that I suffered through you will be easier to bear. And yet there is one thing more that you must know—something that will make it harder for you to meet your Maker, but easier for me. . . . Listen." He knelt beside him

and almost shrieked it: "I had no one in the whole world to care for me when I was tried for my life but my wife—and you, you fiend, you murderer—you killed her. She died six years ago—starved and died.

Cressingham, with closed eyes, lay with his head supported on Challoner's left arm. Presently a tremor shook his frame, a fleck of foam bubbled from between his lips, and then the end.

With cold, merciless eyes the other regarded him, with clenched hands and set teeth. Then he went for'ard and unbent the boat's kedge, and with the same lashings that had bound the living man to the thwart he lashed the kedge across the dead man's chest.

He stood up and looked at the approaching steamer, and then he raised the body in his arms and dropped it over the side.

A few days later the papers said that the steamer *Maungatapu* had picked up a man named Harry, who with Captain Cressingham, of the *Belted Will*, had been blown out to sea from Port ——. It appeared from the survivor's statement that during a heavy squall the same night Captain Cressingham had fallen overboard, and his companion was unable to rescue him.

"The Best Asset in a Fool's Estate."

A SLIGHT smile lit up the clear-cut, sombre face of Lawson from Safune, as looking up from his boat at Etheridge's house he saw the glint of many lights shining through the walls of the roughly-built store. It was well on towards midnight when he had left Safune and sailed round to Etheridge's, a distance of twelve or fifteen miles, and as his boat touched the sand the first streaks of dawn were changing the dead whiteness of the beach into a dull grey—soon to brighten into a creamy yellow as the sun pierced the heavy land-mist.

A native or two, wrapped from head to foot in the long *lava lava* of white calico, passed him as he followed the windings of the track to Etheridge's, but gave him no sign of greeting. Had he been any one of the few other white men living on Savaii the dark men would have stopped him and, native-like, inquired the reason of his early visit to their town. But they knew Lawson too well. *Matāaitu* they called him—devil-faced. And in this they were not far wrong, for Lawson, with his dark olive skin, jet black beard, and eyes that belied the ever-smiling lips, was not a man whom people would be unanimous in trusting.

The natives knew him better than did his few white acquaintances in Samoa, for here, among them, the mask that hid his inner nature from his compeers was sometimes put aside, though never thrown away. But Etheridge, the hot-blooded young Englishman and friend of six months' standing, thought and spoke of him as "the best fellow in the world."

Etheridge had been taking stock, and the wearisome work had paled his usually florid features. His face flushed with pleasure at Lawson's quiet voice:—

"Hard at it, Etheridge? I don't know which looks the paler—you or Lália. Why on earth didn't you send for me sooner? Any one would think you were some poor devil of a fellow trading for the Dutchmen instead of being an independent man. Now, I'm hungry and want breakfast—that is, if Lália isn't too tired to get it," and he looked compassionately at Etheridge's young half-caste wife, sister to his own.

"I'm not tired," said the girl, quietly. "I've had easy tasks—counting packets of fish-hooks, grosses of cotton, and things like that. Billy wouldn't let me help him with the prints and heavy things," and with the faintest shadow of a smile on her lips she passed through into the sitting-room and thence outside to the little thatched cook-house a few yards away. With ardent infatuation Etheridge rested his blue eyes on the white-robed, slender figure as she stood at the door and watched the Niuē cook light his fire for an early cup of coffee—the first overture to breakfast at Etheridge's.

"By Jove, Lawson, I'm the luckiest man in Samoa to get such a wife as Lália—and I only a new-chum to the Islands. I believe she'd work night and day if I'd allow it. And if it hadn't been for you I'd never have met her at all, but would have married some fast creature who'd have gone through me in a month and left me a dead-broken beachcomber."

"Yes," said Lawson, "she is a good girl, and, except her sister, about the only half-caste I ever knew whom I would trust implicitly. Their mother was a Hervey Island woman, as I told you, and Lália has been with Terere and me all over Polynesia, and I think I know her nature. She's fond of you, Etheridge, in her quiet, undemonstrative way, but she's a bit shy yet. You see, you don't speak either Rarotongan or Samoan, and half-caste wives hate talking English. Now, tell me, what is it worrying you? You haven't had another attack?"

"Yes," said the younger man, "I have—and a bad one, too, and that's why I sent for you. The stock-taking is nothing; but I was afraid I might get another that would stiffen me properly. Look here, Lawson, you've been a true friend to me. You picked me up six months ago a drunken, half-maddened beast in Apia and saved my life, reason, and money, and——"

"Bosh!" said Lawson, taking his coffee from the hand of Etheridge's wife; "don't think of it, my boy. Every man goes a bit crooked sometimes; so don't thank me too much."

Etheridge waited till his wife was gone and then resumed: "I've been horribly scared, Lawson, over this," and he placed his hand over his heart, "I was

lifting a case of biscuits when I dropped like a pithed bullock. When I came to, Lália was bathing my face. . . . I feel pretty shaky still. The doctor at Goddeffroy's warned me, too—said I'd go off suddenly if I wasn't careful. My father and one brother died like that. And I want to talk things over with you in case, you know."

Lawson nodded.

"Everything I have is for her, Lawson—land, house, trade, and money. You're pretty sure there's no irregularity in that will of mine, aren't you?"

"Sure. It's very simply written. It's properly witnessed, and would hold in any court of law if contested. And perhaps your people in Australia might do that."

Etheridge reddened. "No; I cut adrift from 'em long ago. Grog, you know. Beyond yourself and Lália, I haven't a soul who'll bother about me. I think, Lawson, I'll take a run up to Apia and see the Dutch doctor again. Fearful cur, am I not?"

"Come, Etheridge," and Lawson laid his smooth, shapely hand—how dishonest are shapely hands!—on the other's arm. "You're a little down. Anything wrong with one's heart always gives a man a bad shaking. There's Lália calling us to breakfast, so I won't say any more but this: Even if Lália wasn't my wife's sister, and anything happened to you, there's always a home for her in my house. I'd do that for your sake alone, old man, putting aside the principle I go on of showing respect to any white man's wife, even if she were a Oahu girl and had rickety ideas of morality."

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When Lawson had first met him and had carried him down to his station on Savaii, nursed him through his illness and treated him like a brother, Etheridge, with the impulsive confidence of his simple nature, poured out his thanks and told his history, and eagerly accepted Lawson's suggestion to try his hand at trading, instead of continuing his erratic wanderings—wanderings which could only end in his "going broke" at Tahiti or Honolulu. Fifteen miles or so away, Lawson said, there was a village with a good opening for a trader. How much could he put into it? Well, he had £500 with him, and there was another thousand in Sydney—the last of five. Ample, said his host. So one day the land was bought, a house and store put up, and Etheridge commenced life as a trader.

The strange tropic beauty of the place and the ways of the people soon cast their spell over Etheridge's imaginative nature, and he was as happy as a man possibly could be—with a knowledge that his life hung by a thread. How slender that thread was Lawson knew, perhaps, better than he. The German doctor had said, "You must dell him to be gareful, Mr. Lawson. Any excidemend, any zooden drouble mit anydings; or too much visky midout any excidemends, and he drop dead. I dell you."

A month or so after he had settled, Etheridge paid his weekly visit to Lawson, and met Lália.

"This is my wife's sister," said Lawson; "she has been on a visit to some friends in Tutuila, and came back in the *Iserbrook*."

The clear-cut, refined, and beautiful features of the

girl did their work all too quickly on Etheridge. He was not a sensualist, only a man keenly susceptible to female beauty, and this girl was beautiful—perhaps not so beautiful as her sister, Terere, Lawson's wife, but with a softer and more tender light in her full, dark eyes. And Lawson smiled to himself when Etheridge asked him to come outside and smoke when his wife and her sister had said good-night. A student of human nature, he had long ago read the simple mind of Etheridge as he would an open book, and knew what was coming. They went outside and talked—that is, Etheridge did. Lawson listened and smoked. Then he put a question to the other man.

"Of course I will, Lawson; do you think I'm scoundrel enough to dream of anything else? We'll go up to Apia and get married by the white missionary."

Lawson laughed in his quiet way. "I wouldn't think you a scoundrel at all, Etheridge. I may as well tell you that I'm not married to her sister. We neglected doing that when I lived in the eastward groups, and no one in Samoa is any the wiser, and wouldn't think anything of it if they were. But although I'm only a poor devil of a trader, I'm a man of principle in some things. Lália is but a child, so to speak, and I'm her natural protector. Now, you're a fellow of some means, and if anything did happen to you she wouldn't get a dollar if she wasn't legally your wife. The consul would claim everything until he heard from your relatives. And she's very young, Etheridge, and you've told me often enough that your heart's pretty dicky. Don't think me a brute."

Etheridge grasped his hand and wrung it. "No, no—a thousand times no. You're the best-hearted fellow in the world, and I honour you all the more, Lawson. Will you ask her to-morrow?"

Perhaps if he had heard the manner of Lawson's asking it would have puzzled his simple brain. And the subdued merriment of the two sisters might have caused him to wonder still more.

A week or so after, Etheridge and the two sisters went up to Apia. Lawson was unable to go. Copra was coming in freely, he had said with a smile, and he was too poor to run away from business—even to the wedding of his own wife's sister.

As Etheridge and his young wife came out of the mission church some natives and white loafers stood around and watched them.

"Ho, Māgalo," said one, "is not that *teine*, the sister of the wife of *Matdaitu*, the black-visaged *papalagi*?"

"Aye," answered a skinny old hag, carrying a basket of water-bottles, "'tis she, and the other is Terere. I lived with them once at Tutuila. She who is now made a wife and looketh so good and holy went away but a year ago with the captain of a ship—a pig of a German—and now, look you, she marrieth an Englishman."

The other natives laughed, and then an ugly fat-faced girl with lime-covered head and painted cheeks called out "Pāpatetele!" and Terere turned round and cursed them in good English.

"What does that mean?" said a white man to Flash Harry from Saleimoa—a man full of island lore.

"Why, it means as the bride isn't all as she purfesses to be. Them pretty soft-lookin' ones like her seldom is, in Samoa or anywhere else."

The day following the stock-taking Etheridge went to Apia—and never came back.

One night a native tapped gently at Lawson's window and handed him a note. As he read Terere with a sleepy yawn awoke, and, stretching one rounded arm out at full length, let it fall lazily on the mat-bed.

"What is it, Harry?"

"Get up, d—— you! Etheridge is dead, and I'm going to take Lália up to Apia as quick as I can. Why the h—— couldn't he die here?"

A rapid vision of unlimited presents from the rich young widow passed through the mind of Terere—to whom the relations that had formerly existed between her and Lawson were well known—as she and he sped along in his boat to Etheridge's. Lália received the news with much equanimity and a few tears, and then leaving Terere in charge, she got into the boat and rolled a cigarette. Lawson was in feverish haste. He was afraid the consul would be down and baulk his rapid but carefully arranged scheme. At Safune he sent his crew of two men ashore to his house for a breaker of water, and then once they were out of sight he pushed off and left them. They were in the way and might spoil everything. The breeze was strong, and that night Lawson and Lália, instead of being out in the open sea beating up to Apia, were ashore in the sitting-room of the white missionary house on the other side of Savaii.

"I am indeed glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Lawson. Your honourable impulse deserves commendation. I have always regretted the fact that a man like you whose reputation as an educated and intelligent person far above that of most traders here is not unknown to me"—Lawson smiled sweetly—"should not alone set at defiance the teaching of Holy Writ, but tacitly mock at *our* efforts to inculcate a higher code of morality in these beautiful islands. Ere long I trust I may make the acquaintance of your brother-in-law, Mr. Etheridge, and his wife."

Lawson smiled affably, and a slight tinge suffused the creamy cheek of Lália.

"And now, Mr. Lawson, as you are so very anxious to get back home I will not delay. Here are my wife and my native assistant as witnesses. Stand up, please."

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"Get in, you little beast," said Lawson, as he bundled Lália into the boat and started back home, "and don't fall overboard. I don't want to lose the Best Asset in that Fool's Estate."

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When the consul, a week later, came down to take possession of Etheridge's "estate," he called in at Safune to ask Lawson to come and help him to take an inventory. Terere met him with a languid smile, and, too lazy perhaps to speak English, answered his questions in Samoan.

"He's married and gone," she said.

"Married? Aren't *you* Mrs. Lawson?" said the bewildered consul, in English.

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"Not now, sir; my sister is. Will you take me to Apia in your boat, please?"

And that is how Lawson, the *papalagi mativa* (poor white) and "the best-hearted fellow in the world," became a *mau alua*—a man of riches, and went, with the Best Asset in Etheridge's estate, the calm-eyed Lália, to start a hotel in—well, no matter where.

Deschard of Oneaka.

I.

AMONG the Gilbert Group—that chain of low-lying sandy atolls annexed by the British Government two years ago—there is one island that may be said to be both fertile and beautiful; yet for all this Kuria—for so it is called by the natives of the group generally—has remained almost uninhabited for the past forty years. Together with the lagoon island of Aranuka, from which it is distant about six miles, it belongs to the present King of Apamama, a large and densely populated atoll situated half a degree to the eastward. Thirty years ago, however, the grandfather of the lad who is now the nominal ruler of Apamama had cause to quarrel with the Kurians, and settled the dispute by invading their island and utterly destroying them, root and branch. To-day it is tenanted only by the young king's slaves.

Of all the many groups and archipelagoes that stud the North and South Pacific from the rocky, jungle-covered Bonins to Juan Fernandez, the islands of the Gilbert Group are—save for this Kuria—the most uninviting and monotonous in appearance. They are

for the most part but narrow strips of sandy soil, densely clothed, it is true, with countless thousands of stately cocoanut palms varied with groves of pandanus and occasional patches of stunted scrub, but flat and unpleasing to the eye. Seldom exceeding two miles in width—although, as is the case at Drummond's Island, or Taputeouea, they sometimes reach forty in the length of their sweeping curve—but few present a continuous and unbroken stretch of land, for the greater number consist of perhaps two or three score of small islands, divided only by narrow and shallow channels, through which at high water the tide sweeps in from the ocean to the calm waters of the lagoons with amazing velocity. These strips of land, whether broken or continuous, form the eastern or windward boundaries of the lagoons; on the western or lee side lie barrier reefs, between whose jagged coral walls there are, at intervals widely apart, passages sufficiently deep for a thousand-ton ship to pass through in safety, and anchor in the transparent depths of the lagoon within its protecting arms.

Years ago, in the days when the whaleships from Nantucket, and Salem, and Martha's Vineyard, and New Bedford cruised northward towards the cold seas of Japan and Tchantar Bay, and the smoky glare of their tryworks lit up the ocean at night, the Gilberts were a wild place, and many a murderous scene was enacted on white beach and shady palm grove. Time after time some whaler, lying to in fancied security outside the passage of a lagoon, with half her crew ashore intoxicated with sour toddy, and the other half on board unsuspecting of danger, would

be attacked by the ferocious brown people. Swimming off at night-time, with knives held between their teeth, a desperate attempt would be made to cut off the ship. Sometimes the attempt succeeded; and then canoe after canoe would put out from the shore, and the wild people, swarming up the ship's side, would tramp about her ensanguined decks and into the cabins seeking for plunder and fiery New England rum. Then, after she had been gutted of everything of value to her captors, as the last canoe pushed off, smoke and then flames would arise, and the burning ship would drift away with the westerly current, and the tragedy of her fate, save to the natives of the island, and perhaps some renegade white man who had stirred them to the deed, would never be known.

In those days—long ere the advent of the first missionary to the isolated equatorial atolls of Polynesia and Melanesia—there were many white men scattered throughout the various islands of the Ellice, Gilbert, and Marshall groups. Men, these, with a past that they cared not to speak of to the few strangers they might chance to meet in their savage retreats. Many were escaped convicts from Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, living, not in dread of their wild native associates, but in secret terror of recapture by a man-of-war and a return to the horrors of that dreadful past. Casting away the garb of civilisation and tying around their loins the *airiri* or grass girdle of the Gilbert Islanders, they soon became in appearance, manners, language, and thoughts pure natives. For them the outside world meant a life of degradation, possibly a shameful death. And as the years went

by and the bitter memories of the black days of old, resonant with the clank of fetters and the warder's harsh cry, became dulled and faint, so died away that once for-ever-haunting fear of discovery and recapture. In Teaké, the bronzed, half-naked savage chief of Maiana, or Mési, the desperate leader of the natives that cut off the barque *Addie Passmore* at Marakei, the identity of such men as "Nuggety" Jack West and Macy O'Shea, once of Van Diemen's Land or Norfolk Island, was lost for ever.

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II.

On Kuria, the one beautiful island of the Gilberts, there lived four such white men as those I speak of. Whence they came they alone knew. Two of them—a Portuguese deserter from a whaler and a man named Corton—had been some years on the island when they were joined by two others who came over from Apamama in a boat. One was called Tamu (Tom) by the natives, and from the ease with which he spoke the Gilbert Island dialect and his familiarity with native customs, he had plainly lived many years among the natives; the other was a tall, dark-skinned, and morose-looking man of nearly fifty. He was known as Hari to the natives—once, in that outer world from which some crime had dis severed him for ever, he was Henry Deschard.

Although not familiar with either the language or the customs of the ferocious inhabitants of the Gilbert Group, it was soon seen by the ease with which he acquired both that Hari had spent long years roaming

about the islands of the Pacific. In colour he was darker than the Kurians themselves; in his love of the bloodshed and slaughter that so often ran riot in native quarrels he surpassed even the fiercest native; and as he eagerly espoused the cause of any Kurian chief who sought his aid he rapidly became a man of note on the island, and dreaded by the natives elsewhere in the group.

There were then over a thousand people living on Kuria—or rather, on Kuria and Oneaka, for the island is divided by one of those narrow channels before mentioned; and at Oneaka Tamu and Deschard lived, while the Portuguese and the man Corton had long held joint sway with the native chief of Kuria.

During the time the four renegades had lived on the island two vessels that had touched there had had narrow escapes from seizure by the natives. The first of these, a small Hawaiian whaling brig, was attacked when she was lying becalmed between Kuria and Aranuka. A breeze springing up, she escaped after the loss of a boat's crew, who were entrapped on the latter island. In this affair Deschard and Tamu had taken part; in the next—an attempt to capture a sandalwooding barque bound to China—he was leader, with Corton as his associate. The sandalwooder, however, carried a large and well-armed crew, and the treacherous surprise so elaborately planned came to ignominious failure. Deschard accused his fellow-beachcomber of cowardice at a critical moment. The two men became bitter enemies, and for years never spoke to each other.

III.

But one afternoon a sail was sighted standing in for the island, and in their hateful bond of villainy the two men became reconciled, and agreed with Pedro and Tamu and some hundreds of natives to try to decoy the vessel to an anchor and cut her off. The beachcombers, who were tired of living on Kuria, were anxious to get away; the natives desired the plunder to be obtained from the prize. A compact was then made that the ship, after the natives had done with her, was not to be burnt, but was to be handed over to the white men, who were to lead the enterprise.

Sailing slowly along till she came within a mile of the reef, the vessel hove to and lowered a boat. She was a large brigantine, and the murderous beings who watched her from the shore saw with cruel pleasure that she did not appear to carry a large crew.

It had been agreed upon that Corton, who had special aptitude for such work, should meet the boat and endeavour to lure the crew into the interior, under the promise of giving them a quantity of fresh-water fish from the artificial ponds belonging to the chief, while Deschard and the other two, with their body of native allies, should remain at the village on Oneaka, and at the proper moment attack the ship.

As the boat drew near, the officer who was in charge saw that although there were numbers of natives clustered together on the beach, the greater portion were women and children. He had with him

five men, all armed with muskets and cutlasses, and although extremely anxious to avoid a collision, he was not at all alarmed. The natives meanwhile preserved a passive attitude, and when the men in the boat, at a word from the officer, stopped rowing, backed her in stern first, and then lay on their oars, they nearly all sat down on the sand and waited for him to speak.

Standing up in the boat, the officer hailed—

"Hallo there, ashore! Any white men living here?"

For a minute or so there was no answer, and the eyes of the natives turned in the direction of one of their number who kept well in the background.

Again the seaman hailed, and then a man, seemingly a native, stout and muscular, with hair falling down in thick masses upon his reddish-brown shoulders, walked slowly out from the others, and folding his brawny arms across his naked chest, he answered—

"Yes; there's some white men here."

The officer, who was the mate of the brigantine, then spoke for a few minutes to a young man who pulled bow oar, and who from his dress was not one of the crew, and said finally, "Well, let us make sure that there is no danger first, Maurice."

The young man nodded, and then the mate addressed the seeming native again:

"There's a young fellow here wants to come ashore; he wants to see one of the white men here. Can he come ashore?"

"Of course he can. D'ye think we're a lot o' cannibals here? I'm a white man myself," and he

laughed coarsely ; then added quickly, " Who does he want to see ? "

The man who pulled the bow oar sprang to his feet.

" I want to see Henry Deschard ! "

" Do you ? " was the sneering response. " Well, I don't know as you can. This isn't his day at home, like ; besides that, he's a good long way from here just now. "

" I've got good news for him, " urged the man called Maurice.

The beachcomber meditated a few seconds ; then he walked down to the boat.

" Look here, " he said, " I'm telling the exac' truth. Deschard's place is a long way from here, in the bush too, so you can't go there in the boat ; but look here, why can't you chaps come along with me ? I'll show you the way, and you'll have a good look at the island. There's nothin' to be afraid of, I can tell you. Why, these natives is that scared of all them guns there that you won't see 'em for dust when you come with me ; an' the chief says as you chaps can drag one of his fish-ponds. "

The mate was tempted ; but his orders were to allow only the man Maurice to land, and to make haste back as soon as his mission was accomplished. Shaking his head to the renegade's wily suggestion, he, however, told Maurice that he could go and endeavour to communicate with Deschard. In the meantime he would return to the ship, and tell the captain—" and the other " (these last words with a look full of meaning at the young man) that everything was going on all right.

Foiled in his plan of inducing all the men to come ashore, Corton assumed a careless manner, and told Maurice that he was still willing to conduct him to Dea hard, but that he would not be able to return to the ship that night, as the distance was too great.

The mate was agreeable to this, and bidding the beachcomber and his victim good-day he returned to the ship.

Holding the young man's hand in his, the burly renegade passed through the crowd of silent natives, and spoke to them in their own tongue.

"Hide well thy spears and clubs, my children; 'tis not yet time to act."

Still clasping the hand of his companion, he led the way through the native town, and then into the narrow bush track that led to Oneaka, and in another five minutes they were alone, or apparently so, for nought could be heard in the fast gathering darkness but their own footsteps as they trod the leafy path, and the sound of the breaching surf long miles away.

Suddenly the beachcomber stopped, and in a harsh voice said—

"What is the good news for Deschard?"

"That I cannot tell you," answered the stripling, firmly, though the grim visage, tattooed body, and now threatening aspect of his questioner might well have intimidated even a bolder man, and instinctively he thrust his hand into the bosom of his shirt and grasped a letter he carried there.

"Then neither shall Deschard know it," said the man savagely, and throwing himself upon the young man he bore him to the ground, while shadowy,

naked figures glided out from the blackness of the forest and bound and gagged him without a sound. Then carrying him away from the path the natives placed him, without roughness, under the shelter of an empty house, and then left him.

The agony of mind endured by the helpless prisoner may be imagined when, unable to speak or move, he saw the beachcomber and his savage followers vanish into the darkness; for the letter which he carried had been written only a few hours before by the wife of the man Deschard, telling him of her loving quest, and of her and her children's presence on board the brigantine.

IV.

At daylight next morning some native women, passing by the deserted house on their way to work in the *puraka* plantations of Oneaka, saw the figure of the messenger lying dead. One of the women, named Niapó, in placing her hand upon his bosom to feel if he yet breathed, found the letter which had cost him his life. For nearly twenty years she kept possession of it, doubtless from some superstitious motive, and then it was bought from her by a white trader from Apamama, named Randall, by whom it was sent to the Rev. Mr. Damon, the "Sailors' Friend," a well-known missionary in Honolulu. This was the letter:—

MY DEAR HUSBAND,—It is nearly three years since I got your letter, but I dared not risk writing to you, even if I had known of a ship leaving for the South Seas or the whale fishery. None of the

sandalwooding people in Sydney seemed even to know the name of this island (Courier?). My dear husband, I have enough money now, thank God, to end all our troubles. Your letter was brought to me at Parramatta by a sailor—an American, I think. He gave it first to Maurice. I would have rewarded him, but before I could speak to him he had gone. For ten years I have waited and prayed to God to bring us together again. We came to Sydney in the same ship as Major D——, of the 77th. He has always been so good to us, and so has his wife. Nell is sixteen now, Laura eighteen. God grant that I will see you in a few hours. The captain says that he will land us all at one of the places in the Dutch East Indies. I have paid him £100, and am to pay him £100 when you are safely on board. I have been so miserable for the past year, as Major D—— had heard that a man-of-war was searching the islands, and I was in such terrible fear that we would never meet again. Come quickly, and God bless you, my dear husband. Maurice insisted and begged to be allowed to take this to you. He is nineteen years old now, but will not live long—has been a faithful and good lad. Laura is eighteen, and Nell nearly sixteen now. We are now close to Courier,² and should see you ere long.—Your loving and now joyful wife,—ANNA DESCHARD.

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In the big *maniapa*, or council house, on Oneaka, two hundred armed and naked savages were sitting awaiting the arrival of Corton and his warriors from

² The native pronunciation of Kurin is like "Courier."—L. A.

Kuria. A little apart from the muttering, excited natives, and seated together, were the man Deschard and the two other beachcombers, Pedro and Tamu.

As Corton and his men filed across the gravelled pathway that led to the *maniapa*, Deschard, followed by the two other white men, at once came out, and the former, with a fierce curse, demanded of Corton what had kept him.

"Couldn't manage to get them ashore," answered the other, sulkily. Then he proceeded to impart the information he had gained as to the ship, her crew, and armament.

"Nine men and one native boy!" said Deschard, contemptuously. He was a tall, lean-looking, black-bearded man, with even a more terrifying and savage appearance than any of his ruffianly partners in crime, tattooed as he was from the back of his neck to his heels in broad, perpendicular lines. As he fixed his keen eyes upon the countenance of Corton his white teeth showed in a cruel smile through his tangled, unkempt moustache.

Calling out the leading chiefs of the cutting-out party, the four desperadoes consulted with them upon their plan of action for the attack upon the brigantine, and then arranged for each man's work and share of the plunder. The white men were to have the ship, but everything that was of value to the natives and not necessary to the working of the ship was to be given to the natives. The muskets, powder, and ball were to be evenly divided between the whites and their allies.

Six of the native chiefs then swore by the names of their deified ancestors to faithfully observe the

murderous compact. After the ship was taken they were to help the white men if the ship had anchored to get her under way again.

It was the intention of Deschard and his mates to make for the East Indies, where they would have no trouble in selling the ship to one of the native potentates of that archipelago.

At daylight the brigantine, which had been kept under easy sail during the night, was seen to be about four miles from the land, and standing in. Shortly after, two or three canoes, with only a few men in each, put off from the beach at Oneaka and paddled out leisurely towards the ship. When about a mile or so from the shore they ceased paddling, and the captain of the brigantine saw by his glass that they were engaged in fishing.

This was merely a device to inspire confidence in those on board the ship.

In another hour the brigantine passed close to one of the canoes, and a native, well tutored by past masters in the art of treachery in the part he had to play, stood up in the canoe and held out a large fish, and in broken English said it was a present for the captain.

Pleased at such a friendly overture, the captain put the helm down for the canoe to come alongside. Handing the fish up over the side, the giver clambered up himself. The three other natives in the canoe then paddled quietly away as if under no alarm for the safety of their comrade, and resumed their fishing.

As the ship drew into the land the mate called the

captain's attention to some eight or ten more natives who were swimming off to the ship.

"No danger from these people, sir," he remarked; "they are more frightened of us than we of them, I believe, and then look at the women and girls fishing on the reef. When the women come out like that, fearless and open-like, there isn't much to be afraid of."

One by one the natives who were swimming reached the ship, and apparently encouraged by the presence of the man who had boarded the ship from the fishing canoe, they eagerly clambered up on deck, and were soon on the most friendly terms with the crew, especially with one of their own colour, a half-caste native boy from the island of Ambrym, in the New Hebrides, named Maru.

This Maru was the sole survivor of the awful tragedy that followed, and appeared to be well acquainted with the captain's object in calling at Kuria—to pick up the man named Descbard. More than twenty years afterwards, when speaking of the events here narrated, his eyes filled with tears when he told of the "white lady and her two daughters" who were passengers, and who had sat on the poop the previous day awaiting the return of the mate's boat, and for tidings of him whom they had come so far to find.

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V.

The timid and respectful manner of the islanders had now so impressed the master of the brigantine that in a fatal moment he decided to anchor. Telling

the mate to range the cable and clear away all ready, he descended to the cabin and tapped at the door of a state-room.

"I am going to anchor, Mrs. Deschard, but as there are a lot of rather curious-looking natives on board, you and the young ladies had better keep to your cabin."

The door opened, and a girl of seventeen or eighteen appeared, and, taking the captain's hand, she whispered—

"She is asleep, captain. She kept awake till daylight, hoping that my father would come in the night. Do you think that anything has happened either to him or Maurice?"

Maru, the Ambrym cabin-boy, said that the captain "patted the girl's hand" and told her to have no fear—that her father was on the island "sure enough," and that Maurice would return with him by breakfast time.

The brigantine anchored close in to the shore, between Kuria and Oneaka, and in a few minutes the long boat was lowered to proceed on shore and bring off Maurice and Deschard. Four hands got into her and then the mate. Just as he was about to cast off, the English-speaking native begged the captain to allow him and the rest of his countrymen to go ashore in the boat. Unsuspicious of treachery from unarmed natives, the captain consented, and they immediately slipped over the side into the boat.

There were thus but four white men left on board—the captain, second mate, two A.B.'s—and the half-caste boy Maru. Arms and ammunition, sufficient for

treble the crew the brigantine carried, were on board. In those days the humblest merchant brig voyaging to the East Indies and China coast carried, in addition to small arms, either two or four guns (generally 6-pounders) in case of an attack by pirates. The brigantine was armed with two 6-pounders, and these, so the Ambrym half-caste said, were still loaded with "bags of bullets" when she came to an anchor. Both of the guns were on the main deck amidships.

Contrary to the wishes of the mate, who appeared to have the most unbounded confidence in the peaceableness of the natives, the captain had insisted upon his boat's crew taking their arms with them.

No sooner had the boat left the vessel than the English-speaking native desired the mate to pull round to the east side of Oneaka, where, he said, the principal village was situated, and whither Maurice had gone to seek Deschard. It must be remembered that this native and those with him were all members of Corton's *clientèle* at Kuria, and were therefore well aware of his treachery in seizing the messenger to Deschard, and that Maurice had been seized and bound the previous night.

In half an hour, when the boat was hidden from the view of those on board the brigantine, the natives, who outnumbered the whites two to one, at a signal from their leader suddenly threw themselves upon the unsuspecting seamen who were rowing and threw every one of them overboard. The mate, a small, active man, managed to draw a heavy horse pistol from his belt, but ere he could pull the trigger he was dealt a crushing blow with a musket stock. As he

fell a native thrust him through and through with one of the seamen's cutlasses. As for the unfortunate seamen, they were killed one by one as they struggled in the water. That part of the fell work accomplished, the natives pulled the boat in towards Oneaka, where some ten or fifteen large native double-ended boats and canoes, all filled with savages lusting for blood and rapine, awaited them.

Deschard, a man of the most savage courage, was in command of some twenty or thirty of the most noted of the Oneaka warriors; and on learning from Tebarian (the native who spoke English and who was Corton's brown familiar) that the two guns were in the waist of the ship, he instructed his white comrades to follow in the wake of his boat, and, once they got alongside, board the ship wherever their fancy dictated.

There was a muttered *E rairai!* (Good!) of approval from the listening natives, and then in perfect silence and intuitive discipline the paddles struck the water, and the boat and canoes, with their naked, savage crews, sped away on their mission of death.

VI.

But, long before they imagined, they had been discovered, and their purpose divined from the ship. Maru, the keen-eyed half-caste, who was the first to notice their approach, knew from the manner in which the canoes kept together that something unusual was about to occur, and instantly called the captain. Glass in hand, the latter ascended the main rigging for a dozen ratlins or so and looked at the advancing

flotilla. A very brief glance told him that the boy had good cause for alarm—the natives intended to cut off the ship, and the captain, whom Maru described as “an old man with a white head,” at once set about to make such a defence as the critical state of affairs rendered possible.

Calling his men to him and giving them muskets, he posted two of them on top of the deckhouse, and with the remainder of his poor force stationed himself upon the poop. With a faint hope that they might yet be intimidated from attacking, he fired a musket shot in the direction of the leading boat. No notice was taken ; so, descending to the main deck with his men, he ran out one of the 6-pounders and fired it. The roar of the heavily-charged gun was answered by a shrill yell of defiance from two hundred throats.

“Then,” said Maru, “the captain go below and say good-bye to women and girls, and shut and lock cabin door.”

Returning to the deck, the brave old man and his second mate and two men picked up their muskets and began to fire at the black mass of boats and men that were now well within range. As they fired, the boy Maru loaded spare muskets for them as fast as his trembling hands would permit.

Once only, as the brigantine swung to the current, the captain brought the gun on the port side to bear on them again, and fired ; and again there came back the same appalling yell of defiance, for the shower of bullets only made a wide slat of foam a hundred yards short of the leading boat.

By the time the gun was reloaded the brigantine had swung round head to shore again ; and then, as the

despairing but courageous seamen were trying to drag it forward again, Deschard and his savages in the leading boat had gained the ship, and the wild figure of the all but naked beachcomber sprang on deck, followed by his own crew and nearly two hundred other fiends well-nigh as bloodthirsty and cruel as himself. Some two or three of them had been killed by the musketry fire from the ship, and their fellows needed no incentive from their white leaders to slay and spare not.

Abandoning the gun, the captain and his three men and the boy Maru succeeded in fighting their way through Deschard's savages and reaching one of the cabin doors, which, situated under the break of the high poop, opened to the main deck. Ere they could all gain the shelter of the cabin and secure the door the second mate and one of the seamen were cut down and ruthlessly slaughtered, and of the three that did, one—the remaining seaman—was mortally wounded and dying fast.

Even at such a moment as this, hardened and merciless as were their natures and blood-stained their past, it cannot be thought that had Deschard and his co-pirates known that white women were on board the brigantine they would have perpetrated their last dreadful deed. In his recital of the final scene in the cabin Maru spoke of the white woman and the two girls coming out of their state-room and kneeling down and praying with their arms clasped around each other's waists. Surely the sound of their dying prayers could never have been heard by Deschard when, in the native tongue, he called out for one of the guns to be run aft.

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"By and by," said Maru, "woman and girl come to captain and sailor-man Charlie and me and cry and say good-bye, and then captain he pray too. Then he get up and take cutlass, and sailor-man Charlie he take cutlass too, but he too weak and fall down; so captain say, 'Never mind, Charlie, you and me die now like men.'"

Then, cutlass in hand, the white-haired old skipper stood over the kneeling figures of the three women and waited for the end. And now the silence was broken by a rumbling sound, and then came a rush of naked feet along the deck.

"It is the gun," said Maru to the captain, and in an agony of terror he lifted up the hatch of the lazarette under the cabin table and jumped below. And then Deschard's voice was heard.

"*Ta mai te ae*" (Give me the fire).

A blinding flash, a deafening roar, and splintering and crashing of timber followed, and as the heavy pall of smoke lifted, Deschard and the others looked in at their bloody work, shuddered, and turned away.

Pedro, the Portuguese, his dark features turned to a ghastly pallor, was the only one of the four men who had courage enough to assist some of the natives in removing from the cabin the bodies of the three poor creatures who, but such a short time before, were full of happiness and hope. Deschard and the three others, after that one shuddering glance, had kept away from the vicinity of the shot-torn cabin.

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VII.

The conditions of the cutting off of the brigantine were faithfully observed by the contracting parties, and long ere night fell the last boatload of plunder had been taken ashore. Tebarau, chief of Oneaka, had with his warriors helped to heave up anchor, and the vessel, under short canvas, was already a mile or two away from the land, and in his hiding-place in the gloomy lazarette the half-caste boy heard Corton and Deschard laying plans for the future.

Only these two were present in the cabin; Pedro was at the wheel, and Tamu somewhere on deck. Presently Corton brought out the dead captain's despatch box, which they had claimed from the natives, and the two began to examine the contents. There was a considerable amount of money in gold and silver, as well as the usual ship's papers, &c. Corton, who could scarcely read, passed these over to his companion, and then ran his fingers gloatingly through the heap of money before him.

With a hoarse, choking cry and horror-stricken eyes Deschard sprang to his feet, and with shaking hand held out a paper to Corton.

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the unhappy wretch, and sinking down again he buried his face in his hands.

Slowly and laboriously his fellow ex-convict read the document through to the end. It was an agreement to pay the captain of the brigantine the sum of one hundred pounds sterling provided that Henry Deschard was taken on board the brigantine at

Woodle's Island (the name Kuria was known by to whaleships and others), the said sum to be increased to two hundred pounds "provided that Henry Deschard, myself, and my two daughters are lander' at Batavia or any other East India port within sixty days from leaving the said island," and was signed ANNA DESCHARD.

Staggering to his feet, the man sought in the ruined and plundered state-room for further evidence. Almost the first objects that he saw were two hanging pockets made of duck—evidently the work of some seaman—bearing upon them the names of "Helen" and "Laura."

Peering up from his hiding-place in the lazarette, where he had lain hidden under a heap of old jute bagging and other débris, Maru saw Deschard return to the cabin and take up a loaded musket. Sitting in the captain's chair, and leaning back, he placed the muzzle to his throat and touched the trigger with his naked foot. As the loud report rang out, and the cabin filled with smoke, the boy crawled from his dark retreat, and, stepping over the prostrate figure of Deschard, he reached the deck and sprang overboard.

For hours the boy swam through the darkness towards the land, guided by the lights of the fires that in the Gilbert and other equatorial islands are kindled at night-time on every beach. He was picked up by a fishing party, and probably on account of his youth and exhausted condition his life was spared.

That night as he lay sleeping under a mat in the

big *maniapa* on Kuria he was awakened by loud cries, and looking seaward he saw a bright glare away to the westward.

It was the brigantine on fire.

Launching their canoes, the natives went out to her, and were soon close enough to see that she was burning fiercely from for'ard to amidships, and that her three boats were all on board—two hanging to the davits and one on the deckhouse. But of the four beachcombers there was no sign.

Knowing well that no other ship had been near the island, and that therefore the white men could not have escaped by that means without being seen from the shore, the natives, surmising that they were in a drunken sleep, called loudly to them to awake; but only the roaring of the flames broke the silence of the ocean. Not daring to go nearer, the natives remained in the vicinity till the brigantine was nothing but a mastless, glowing mass of fire.

Towards midnight she sank; and the last of the beachcombers of Kuria sank with her.

Nell of Mulliner's Camp.

MULLINER'S CAMP, on the Hodgkinson, was the most hopeless-looking spot in the most God-forsaken piece of country in North Queensland, and Haughton, the amalgamator at the "Big Surprise" crushing-mill, as he turned wearily away from the battery-tables to look at his "retorting" fire, cursed silently but vigorously at his folly in staying there.

It was Saturday night, and the deadly melancholy of Mulliner's was, if possible, somewhat accentuated by the crash and rattle of the played-out old five-head battery, accompanied by the wheezings and groanings of its notoriously unreliable pumping-gear. Half a mile away from the decrepid old battery, and situated on the summit of an adder-infested ironstone ridge, the dozen or so of bark humpies that constituted Mulliner's Camp proper stood out clearly in the bright starlight in all their squat ugliness. From the extra display of light that shone from the doorway of the largest and most dilapidated-looking of the huts, Haughton knew that the Cooktown mailman had come in, and was shouting a drink for the landlord of the "Booming Nugget" before eating his supper of corned beef and damper and riding onward. For

Mulliner's had gone to the bad altogether; even the beef that the mailman was eating came from a beast belonging to old Channing, of Calypso Downs, which had fallen down a shaft the previous night. Perhaps this matter of a fairly steady beef supply was the silver lining to the black cloud of misfortune that had so long enshrouded the spirits of the few remaining diggers that still clung tenaciously to the duffered-out mining camp, for whenever Mulliner's ran out of meat a beast of Channing's would always—by some mysterious dispensation of a kindly goldfield's Providence—fall down a shaft and suffer mortal injuries.

Just at the present moment Haughton, as he threw a log or two into the retort furnace and watched the shower of sparks fly high up over the battery roof, was thinking of old Channing's daughter Kate, and the curious state of affairs existing between her and his partner Ballantyne. Briefly stated, this is what had occurred—that is, as far as Haughton knew.

Twelve months before, Mrs. Channing, a meek-faced, religious-minded lady, had succumbed to the worries of life under the combined and prostrating influences of a galvanised iron roof, an independent Chinaman cook, and a small powerful theological library. Immediately after her death, old Channing at once wrote to his daughter, then at school in Sydney, to come back "and cheer up his lonely life."

"Poor dad," said Kate, "I suppose he means for me to continue poor mother's feeble remonstrances to Chow Kum about giving away so much rations to the

station gins, and to lend a hand when we muster for branding."

However, being a dutiful girl, she packed up and went.

On board the steamer she had met Ballantyne, who was returning to Queensland to resume his mining pursuits in the Palmer District. He knew old Channing well by reputation as a wealthy but eccentric old squatter, and in a few days he managed to make the girl fall violently in love with him. The day that the steamer reached Brisbane a telegram was brought on board for Miss Channing. It was from her father, telling her that Mrs. Lankey, of Mount Brindlebul, was coming up from Sydney in another week, and she was to wait in Brisbane for her. Then they were to travel northward together.

If there was one woman in the world she hated it was Mrs. Lankey, of Mount Brindlebul station, in the Gulf country, and Ballantyne, from whom she could hide nothing, saw his opportunity, and took it. He took her ashore, placed her in lodgings, went to an hotel himself, and the day before her future escort arrived, married her.

Perfectly satisfied with the cogent reasons he gave for secrecy in not apprising her father of their marriage, and shedding tears at the nonchalant manner in which he alluded to a honeymoon "some time in a year or so when the old man comes to know of it," pretty Kate Channing went back alone to her lodgings to await Mrs. Lankey and cogitate upon the peculiarly masterful way in which Ballantyne had wooed and won her.

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Six months afterwards she got a letter from Ballantyne, telling her that he had bought Petermann's crushing mill at Mulliner's Camp, "so as to be near you, my pet," he said. At the same time he warned her of the folly of their attempting to meet, at least openly; but added that Haughton, his partner, who knew of his marriage, would visit Calypso Downs occasionally and give her news of him; also that they could correspond by the same medium.

Thus matters stood between them for some months, till Kate, wearying to meet the cold, calculating Ballantyne, adopted the device of riding over late every Sunday afternoon to Mulliner's for the mail, instead of her father sending over one of his black boys.

But instead of meeting her with kisses, Ballantyne terrified her with savage reproaches. It was madness, he said, for her to run such a risk. By and by he would be in a better position; at present he was as poor as a rat, and it was best for them to be apart. And Kate, thoroughly believing in him, bent to his will. She knew that her father was, as Ballantyne thoughtfully observed, such a violent-tempered old man that he would cast her off utterly unless he was "managed" properly when he learnt of her marriage.

"And don't come down this way from Mulliner's," added the careful Ballantyne. "There's an old mail tin, about a mile or so away from here, near the worked-out alluvial patch. You can always drop a letter in there for me. Haughton's such a good-natured ass that he'll play Mercury for you. Anyway, I'll send him to look in the tin every Sunday night."

That, so far, was the history of Mr. and Mrs. Ballantyne.

"Another duffing crushing," muttered Haughton, as he stooped and placed his hand into the bucket of quicksilver under the nozzle of the retort pipe. "What between a reef that doesn't pan out five pennyweights to the ton, and a woman that pans out too rich, I'm sick of the cursed place."

As he stood up again, and, hands on his hips, looked moodily into the fire, a woman came down the rough path leading from Ballantyne's house to the battery. Walking quickly across the lighted space that intervened between the blacksmith's forge and the fire, she placed a billy of tea on the brick furnace-wall, and then turned her handsome black-browed, gipsy-like face up to his. This was Nell Lawson, the woman who had "panned out too rich."

"Here's your tea, Dick," she said.

"Thanks," he said, taking it from her, and then with a quick look over towards the battery, "I wish you wouldn't call me 'Dick' when any of the hands are about; Lawson might hear of it, and I don't want you to get into any trouble over me."

The black eyes sparkled, and the smooth olive-hued features flushed darkly in the firelight as she grasped his arm.

"You lie!" and she set her teeth. "A lot you care! Do you think I'm a silly? Do you think as I don't know that you want to sling me and don't know how to go about it?" and she grasped his arm savagely.

Haughton looked at her in gloomy silence for a few

seconds. Standing there, face to face, they looked so alike in features—he wiry, muscular, black-bearded, and bronzed to the hue of an Arab, and she tall, dark-haired, with oval, passionate face—they might have been taken for brother and sister.

She let his arm free, and then, being only a working miner's wife, and possessing no handkerchief, whipped her apron to her eyes.

"You're a damned cur!" she said, chokingly. "If it hadn't ha' been for you I'd ha' gone along all right wi' Bob, and put up wi' livin' in this place; an' now——"

"Look here, Nell," said Haughton, drawing her away into the shadow of the forge, "I'm a cur, as you say; but I'd be a worse cur to keep on this way. You can't marry me, can you?"

"You used to talk about our boltin'—*once*," and she snapped out the last word.

Haughton tried to explain why the "bolting" so trenchantly referred to did not eventuate. He was stone-broke. Ballantyne was going to do his own amalgamating at the battery, and it would be cruel of him to ask her to share his fortunes. (Here he began to appreciate his leaning to morality.) If she was a single girl he would stay at Mulliner's and fight it out with bad luck for her sake; but they couldn't go on like this any more. And the people at Mulliner's were beginning to talk about them, &c., &c.

She heard him in silence, and then gave a short, jarring laugh—the laugh that ought to tell a man that he is no longer believed in—by a woman who has loved him.

"I know," she said, quietly, "you want to get clear

o' me. You're took up with Kate Channing, the proper Miss Channing that rides over here o' Sundays to meet you on the sly."

At first he meant to undeceive her, then he thought, "What does it matter? I'll be away from here in a day or so, and after I've gone she'll find I'm not so base as she thought me, poor girl;" so, looking away from her so as to avoid the dangerous light that gleamed in her passionate eyes, he made the plunge.

"That's it, Nell. I'm hard up and desperate. If you were a free woman——"

She struck him in the mouth with her clenched hand—"I'll kill her first, Dick Haughton," and then left him.

A mile or so out from the battery, on a seldom used track that led to an abandoned alluvial workings, a stained and weather-worn biscuit-tin had been nailed to an iron-bark tree. In the prosperous days of Mulliner's it had been placed there by the diggers as a receptacle for letters, and its location there saved the mailman a long *détour* to their camp. At present poor loving Kate Channing and Dick Haughton were the only persons who ever looked into it. After getting the station letters from the landlord of the "Booming Nugget," Kate would ride through the bush and come out on the track just opposite; then, bending down from her horse, she would peer eagerly into the tin to see if a letter had been left there for her. Generally there was not. So, with a sad, wistful look in her blue eyes, she would drop her own tenderly-worded letter in and ride away home.

Twice Nell Lawson had seen her passing over the

ridge towards the old workings, and had wondered what had taken her so far off the road; and on each of these occasions she had seen Dick Haughton follow in the same direction shortly after. He was never away more than half an hour. The first time she simply wondered, the next she grew suspicious, and as she saw him returning went and stopped him. As she threw her arms around his neck she felt the rustling of a letter that lay loosely in the front of the dungaree jumper he always wore when at work. She said nothing, but determined to watch, and one day, with the bitterest hatred gathering at her heart, she saw Kate Channing ride up to the tin on the iron-bark, look carefully inside, and then drop in a letter. And as Nell Lawson could not read she let it lay there untouched. But from that hour murder lay in her passionate heart.

That evening, as she entered Bob Lawson's humpy, her husband, a big, heavy-featured man, looked up and saw the ghastly pallor of her face.

"Why, what's the matter wi' 'ee, Nell? You be lookin' quite sick-loike lately. Tell 'ee what, Nell, thee wants a cheange."

"Mulliner's be a dull pleace," she answered, mechanically.

"Aye, lass, dull as hell in a fog. Mebbe I'll take thee somewheres for a spell."

For nearly another week she nursed her hatred and planned her revenge; and Haughton, as he saw the dark rings forming under her eyes, and the cold, listless manner as she went about her work, began to experience a higher phase of feeling for her than that

of the mere passion which her beauty had first awakened in him long months before.

It was five o'clock on Sunday afternoon. The fierce, blinding sun had just disappeared behind the hideous basalt range twenty miles away from the "Big Surprise," when Nell Lawson put on her white sun-hood and walked slowly towards the old alluvial workings. When well out of sight from any one, near the battery, she turned off towards the creek and made for a big Leichhardt tree that stood on the bank. Underneath it, and evidently waiting for her, was a black fellow, a truculent-looking runaway trooper named Barney.

"You got him that fellow Barney?" she asked, in a low voice.

"*Yo ai*," he replied, keeping one hand behind his back. "Where that plenty fellow money you yabber me yesterday?"

"Here," and she showed him some silver; "ten fellow shilling."

Barney grinned, took the money, and then handed her an old broken-handled crockery teapot, which, in place of a lid, was covered over with a strip of ti-tree bark, firmly secured to the bottom by a strip of dirty calico.

As soon as the black fellow had gone she picked up that which he had given her and walked quickly along the track till she reached the old mail tin. She stood awhile and listened. Not a sound disturbed the heated, oppressive silence. Placing the teapot on the ground, she lifted the stiff, creaking lid of the tin and pushed it well back. Then, taking up the teapot

again, she placed one hand firmly upon the ti-tree bark covering the top, while with the other she unfastened the strip of rag that kept it in position. In another moment, grasping the broken spout in her left hand, she held it over the open tin, and, with a rapid motion, turned it upside down, and whipped away her right hand from the piece of bark.

Something fell heavily against the bottom of the tin, and in an instant she slammed down the lid, and threw the empty teapot in among the boulders, where it smashed to pieces. Then, an evil smile on her dark face, she placed her ear to the side of the tin and listened. A faint, creeping, crawling sound was all she heard. In another minute, with hand pressed tightly against her wildly beating heart, she fled homewards.

“This will be my last ride over, dear Ted,” was the beginning of the letter to Ballantyne that lay in Channing’s bosom. “Father is very ill, and I cannot leave him. Do let me tell him, and ask his forgiveness; it is so miserable for me to keep up this deceit.”

Darkness had set in by the time she had got the mail from the landlord of the “Booming Nugget,” and turned her horse’s head into the track that led over the ridge to the old workings.

Two hours before daylight, Kate Channing’s horse walked riderless up to the sliprails of Calypso Downs, and the stockman who had kept awake awaiting her return, went out to let his young mistress in.

“Got throwed somewhere, I suppose,” he grumbled,

after examining the horse. "This is a nice go. It's no use telling the old man about it; he's too sick to be worried just now, anyway."

Taking a black boy with him, and leading Kate's horse, he set out to look for her, expecting, unless she was hurt, to meet her somewhere between the station and Mulliner's Camp. Just as daylight broke, the black boy, who was leading, stopped.

"Young missus been tumble off horse here," and he pointed to where the scrubby undergrowth on one side of the track was crushed down and broken.

The stockman nodded. "Horse been shy I think it, Billy, at that old tellow post-office there?" and he pointed to the old mail tin, which was not ten feet from where Billy said she had fallen off.

"Go ahead, Billy," said the stockman, "I believe young missus no catch him horse again, and she walk along to Mulliner's."

"*Yo ai*," answered the black boy, and he started ahead. In a few minutes he stopped again with a puzzled look and pointed to Kate Channing's tracks.

"Young missus been walk about all same drunk."

"By jingo, she's got hurted, I fear," said the stockman. "Push ahead, Billy."

A hundred yards further on they found her dead, lying face downwards on the track.

Lifting her cold, stiffened body in his arms, the stockman carried his burden along to Ballantyne's house. Haughton met him at the door. Together they laid the still figure upon the sofa in the front room, and then while the stockman went for Nell Lawson, Haughton went to Ballantyne's bunk and awoke and told him. His mouth twitched nervously

for a second or two, and then his hard, impassive nature asserted itself again.

"'Tis a terrible thing this, Ballantyne," said Haughton, sympathetically, as they walked out together to see the place where she had been thrown.

"Yes," assented the other, "dreadful. Did you hear what Channing's black boy told me?"

"No!"

"He says that she has died from snake-bite. I believe him, too. I saw a boy die on the Etheridge from snake-bite, and he looked as she does now; besides that, there is not a scratch or bruise on her body, so she couldn't have received any hurt unless it was an internal one when she was thrown. Here's the place," and then he started back, for lying at the foot of the tree was the panting, trembling figure of Nell Lawson.

She had tried to get there before them to efface all traces of her deadly work.

"What are you doing here, Mrs. Lawson?" said Ballantyne, sharply; "we sent over for you; don't you know what has happened?"

The strange hysterical "yes" that issued from her pallid lips caused Ballantyne to turn his keen grey eyes upon her intently. Then something of the truth must have flashed across his mind, for he walked up to the tree and looked into the tin.

"Good God!" he said, "poor little woman!" and then he called to Haughton. "Come here, and see what killed her!"

Haughton looked, and a deadly horror chilled his blood: lying in the bottom of the tin was a thick,

brownish-red death adder. It raised its hideous, flattened head for a moment, then lowered it, and lay there regarding them with its deadly eye.

"How did it get there?" he asked

Ballantyne pointed to Nell Lawson, who now stood and leant against a tree for support.

Haughton sprang to her side and seized her hands.

"Are you a murderess, Nell? What had she done to you that you should take her innocent life? She was nothing to me—she was Ballantyne's wife."

She looked at him steadily, and her lips moved, then a shrill, horrible laugh burst forth, and she fell unconscious at his feet.

That day Haughton left Mulliner's Camp for ever.

Perhaps this story should have another ending, and Nell Lawson have met with a just retribution. But, as is the case of many other women—and men—with natures such as hers, she did not. For when old Channing lay dying she nursed him tenderly to the last, and perhaps because of this, or for that he could never understand why blue-eyed Kate had never come back, he left her all he had, much to the wondering admiration of honest, dull-witted Bob, her husband, who almost immediately after the old man's death, when returning home one night from the "Booming Nugget," filled with a great peace of mind and a considerable quantity of bad rum, fell down a shaft and broke his neck, after the manner of one of old Channing's bullocks—and then she married Ballantyne.

Everything seems to come to him who waits—especially if he is systematic in his villainy, and has a confiding wife—as had Ballantyne in his first matrimonial venture.

Auriki Reef.

ONE evening, not long ago, an old island comrade and I sat on the verandah looking out upon the waters of Sydney Harbour, smoking and talking of the old wild days down there in the Marshall group, among the brown people who dwell on the white beaches under the shade of the swaying palms. And as we talked, the faces of those we had known came back one by one to our memories, and passed away.

In front of us, with her tall, black spars cutting out clearly against the flood of moonlight, that lit up the waters of the quiet little bay, lay the old *Wolverene*—to both of us a silent reminder of one night not long ago, under far-off skies, when the old corvette sailed past our little schooner, towering up above us, a cloud of spotless white canvas, as she gracefully rose and sank to the long sweep of the ocean swell.

"Poor old Tierney," said my friend, alluding to the captain of that little schooner. "He's dead now; blew his hand off with dynamite down in the Gilbert Group—did you know?"

"Yes. What a good fellow he was! There are few like him left now. Aye, few indeed."

"By the way, did he ever tell you about Jack Lester and his little daughter, Tessa?"

"Something of it. You were with him in the *Mana* that trip, weren't you?"

"Yes," said my friend, "Brayley and I both. He had been up to Honolulu, sick; and he came on board of the *Mana*, and seemed so anxious to get back to his station on *Maduro* that Tierney—good old fellow as he was—told him to bring his traps aboard, and he would land him there on the way to Samoa. His wife had died five years before, and he had to leave his station in the care of his daughter, a child of twelve or so. Not that he fretted much about the station—it was only the little girl he thought of."

We smoked on in silence awhile. Then my friend resumed—

"I shall never forget that voyage. It was a night such as this that it happened—I mean that affair of the boat on Auriki Reef."

Fifteen years ago is a long time to try back, and although I had been told something of a strange incident that had occurred during one voyage of the Hawaiian schooner *Mana* (she is now a Sydney collier), I could not recall the circumstances.

So then my friend told me the story of the boat on Auriki Reef.

"I have told you that Brayley was a man of few words. But sometimes as we paced the deck together at night, as the schooner skimmed over the seas before the lusty trade-wind, he would talk to me of his child;

and it was easy for me to see that his love for her was the one hope of his life.

"‘I am going back to England soon,’ he said to me one night; ‘there is but one of us left—my sister—and I would like to see her face again in this world. She is older than I—she is past fifty now. . . . And it is thirty years since I said good-bye to her . . . thirty years . . . thirty long years,’ and then he turned his face away and looked out upon the sea. ‘Just to see her, and then say good-bye again, for here I have cast my lot, and here I will die. If I were alone in the world perhaps I would take to civilisation again, but Tessa’—he shook his head—‘she would wither and die in cold England.’

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“Ten days out we ran in amongst the Radack Chain of the Marshall Islands, and the wind falling light, and being surrounded by reefs and low uninhabited coral atolls, Tierney brought to, and anchored for the night. You know the spot, about nine miles due west of Ailuk, and between two sandy atolls covered with a scant growth of cocoanuts and pandanus palms.

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“The ship being all right the hands turned in, leaving only one man on watch, while we three white men laid down aft to smoke and yarn. It was a bright moonlight night, as light as day—just such a night as this. Away on our port quarter, distant about a quarter of a mile, was a shallow patch on which the surf was breaking. It was merely one of those flat patches of coral that, rising up steep from the bottom, have deep

water all round them, but are always covered on the surface by a depth of one or two fathoms—'mushrooms,' we call them, you know. Well, it was such a wonderfully clear night that that shallow patch, with the surf hissing and swirling over and around it, was as clearly visible to us on the schooner as if it had been under our counter, not ten feet away.

"Covering up my face from the vivid moonlight with a soft native mat, I laid down, and after awhile dropped off to sleep.

"How long I had been asleep I did not know then—I learnt afterwards that it was nearly four hours—when I was awakened by a loud hail of 'Beat ahoy!' called out by some one on board.

"I was awake in an instant, and sprang to my feet.

"What is it?' I said to Tierney and Brayley, who were standing close to me, looking out towards the breaking reef. 'Where is the boat that you are hailing?'

"Neither of them answered; Tierney, turning towards me for a second, made a curious half-commanding, half-imploring gesture as if to ask my silence, and then gripping Brayley by his shoulder, stared wildly at the white seeth of the breakers astern of us.

"A quick look along the decks for'ard showed me that all the native sailors were on deck and clustered together in the waist, as far aft as they dared come. Each man had hold of his fellow, and with open mouths and wildly staring eyes they stood like statues of bronze, in an attitude of horror and amazement.

"What is it?' I commenced again, when Tierney

slowly raised his clenched and shaking hand and touched me.

"‘Look,’ he said, in a strange, quivering whisper, ‘in the name of God, man, what is that?’"

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"I followed the direction of his shaking hand. It pointed along the broad, golden stream of moonlight that ran from close under our stern right across to the low, black line that we knew was Ailuk Island. For a moment I saw nothing, then, suddenly, amid the wild boil of the surf in Auriki, I saw a boat, a white-painted boat with a black gunwale streak. One person seemed to be sitting aft with his face drooping upon his breast. The boat seemed to me to be in the very centre of the wild turmoil of waters, and yet to ride with perfect ease and safety. Presently, however, I saw that it was on the other side of the reef, yet so close that the back spray from the curling rollers must have fallen upon it.

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"Pushing Captain Tierney away from him, Brayley suddenly seemed to straighten himself, and taking a step in advance of us he again hailed—

"‘Boat, ahoy!’"

"The loud, hoarse cry pealed over the waters, but no answer came from the silent figure, and then Brayley turned towards us. His bronzed features had paled to the hue of death, and for a moment or two his mouth twitched.

"‘For God’s sake, Tierney, call the hands and lower the boat. It is nothing from the other world that we see—it is my daughter, Tessa.’"

"In a second the old man sprang into life and action, and in a shrill voice that sounded like a scream he called, 'Man the boat, lads!'

"Before one could have counted twenty the boat was in the water, clear of the falls, and Tierney and Brayley, with a crew of four natives, were pulling swiftly for the other boat.

"In a few minutes they reached her, just as a big roller had all but got her and carried her right on top of Auriki. I saw Brayley get out of our boat and into the other, and lift the sitting figure up in his arms, and then Tierney made fast a line, took the strange boat in tow, and headed back for the ship.

"When the boat was within speaking distance, Tierney hailed me—

"Get some brandy ready—she is alive."

"We carried her into the cabin, and as Brayley bent his face over the poor, wasted figure of his chik the hot tears ran down his cheeks, and Tierney whispered to me, 'She is dying fast.'

"We all knew that as soon as we looked at her. Already the grey shadows were deepening on the face of the wanderer as we gathered around her, speaking in whispers. Suddenly the loud clamour of the ship's bell, struck by an unthinking sailor, made the girl's frame quiver.

"With a look of intense pity the captain motioned to Brayley to raise her head to try and get her to swallow a teaspoonful of water. Tenderly the trader raised her, and then for a moment or two the closed,

Auriki Reef.

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weary eyelids slowly drew back and she gazed into his face.

"'Thank God,' the captain said, 'she knows you, Brayley.'

"A faint, flickering smile played about her lips and then ceased. Then a long, low sigh, and her head fell upon his breast.

"At daylight we hove-up anchor and stood on our course for B ayley's Station on Arhnu. Just as we rounded the south end of Ailuk Island we saw the *Lahaina*, schooner, lying-to and signalling that she wanted to speak. Her skipper came aboard, and hurriedly shaking hands with us, asked if we knew that Jack Brayley's little Tessa had gone adrift in his boat ten days ago.

"Silently Tierney led him to the open skylight and pointed down to where she lay with her father kneeling beside her.

"'Poor man!' said the skipper of the *Lahaina*. 'I'm real sorry. I heerd from the natives that Tessa and two native girls and a boy took the whaleboat, for a joke like, and she said she was going to meet her father, as she had seen him in her sleep, an' she reckoned he was close to on the sea somewhere. I guess the poor thing's got swept to leeward by the current. They had a sail in the boat.'

"'Aye,' said Tierney, 'a squall must have struck the boat and carried away the mast; it was snapped off short about a foot above the thwart.'

"When we ran into Maduro Lagoon three days

afterwards our flag was half-mast high for Tessa Brayley, and for her father as well—for we had found him the next morning on his knees beside her, cold and stiff in death, with his dead hand clasped around hers."

Reef.

Tessa
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At the Ebbing of the Tide.

BLACK TOM's "hell" was one of the institutions of Samoa. And not an unpleasant hell to look at—a long, rambling, one-storeyed, white-painted wooden building, hidden on the beach side from ships entering Apia Harbour by a number of stately cocoanuts; and as you came upon it from the palm-shaded track that led from the brawling little Vaisigago towards the sweeping curve of Matautu Point, the blaze of scarlet hibiscus rowing within the white-paled garden fence gave to this sailors' low drinking-den an inviting appearance of sweetest Arcadian simplicity.

That was nineteen years ago. If you walk along the Matautu path now and ask a native to show you where Tom's house stood, he will point to a smooth, grass-covered bank extending from the right-hand side of the path to the coarse, black sand of Matautu beach. And, although many of the present white residents of the Land of the Treaty Powers have heard of Black Tom, only a few grizzled old traders and storekeepers, relics of the bygone lively days, can talk to you about that grim deed of one quiet night in September.

Tamasi Uliuli (Black Thomas), as he was called by the natives, had come to Samoa in the fifties, and, after an eventful and varied experience in other portions of the group, had settled down to business in Matautu as a publican, baker and confectioner, butcher, seamen's crimp, and interpreter. You might go all over the Southern States, from St. Augustine to Galveston, and not meet ten such splendid specimens of negro physique and giant strength as this particular coloured gentleman. Tom had married a Samoan woman—Inusia—who had borne him three children, two daughters and one son. Of this latter I have naught to say here, save that the story of *his* short life and tragic end is one common enough to those who have had any experience of a trader's life among the betel-chewing savages of fever-haunted New Britain. And the eldest daughter may also "stand out" of this brief tale.

Luisa was black. There was no doubt about that. But she was also comely; and her youthful, lissom figure as she walked with springy step to the bathing-place at the Vaisigago gave her a striking individuality among the lighter-coloured Samoan girls who accompanied her. Yet to all of us who lived in Matautu the greatest charms of this curly-haired half-caste were the rich, sweet voice and gay laugh that brightened up her dark-hued countenance as we passed her on the path and returned her cheerful "*Talofa, alii!*" with some merry jest. And, although none of us had any inclination to go into her father's pub. and let *him* serve us with a bottle of Pilsener, Luisa's laughing face and curly head generally had attraction enough

to secure, in the course of the day, a good many half-dollars for the 50lb. beef-keg which was Black Tom's treasury.

It gave us a shock one day to see Luisa emerging from the mission chapel with a white-haired old man by her side—married. The matter had been arranged very quietly. For about two months previously this ancient had been one of Black Tom's boarders. He was from New Zealand, and had come to Samoa to invest his money in trade, and being, perhaps, of a retiring and quiet disposition the sight of Mr. Thomas Tilton's innocent-looking dwelling attracted him thither. Anyhow, old Dermott remained there, and it was noticeable that, from the day of his arrival, Tamasi Uliuli exacted the most rigid performance of morning and evening devotions by his family, and that the nightly scenes of riot and howling drunkenness, that had theretofore characterised the "hotel," had unaccountably toned down. In fact, burly old Alvord, the consular interpreter, who had been accustomed to expostulate with Tom for the number of prostrate figures, redolent of bad rum, lying outside on the path in the early morning, showing by the scarcity of their attire that they had been "gone through" by thieving natives, expressed the opinion that Tom was either going mad, or "was getting consarned" about his sinful soul.

The knowledge of the fact that old Dermott had so much worldly wealth stowed away in his camphor-wood trunk, may have had (doubtless it did) the effect of causing this remarkable change in Tom's daily

conduct. Dermott, in his way, was sourly religious; and, although not understanding a word of Samoan, was fond of attending the native church at Apia—always in the wake of Luisa, Toē-o-le-Sasa, and other young girls. His solemn, wrinkled visage, with deep-set eyes, ever steadily fixed upon the object of his affection, proved a source of much diversion to the native congregation, and poor Luisa was subjected to the usual Samoan jests about the *toē'ina* and *ulu tula* (old man and bald head), and would arrive from the church at her father's hell in a state of suppressed exasperation.

The happy marriage had been celebrated by Tom and his *clientèle* in a manner befitting the occasion and the supposed wealth of the bridegroom. Then none of us saw Luisa for a week at the bathing-place, and her non-appearance was discussed with interest at the nightly kava-drinking at half-caste Johnny Hall's public-house. Old Toi'foi, duenna of the kava-chewing girls, used to say solemnly that the old man had Luisa locked up in her room as she was *vale* (obstinate), and sat on a chair outside and looked at her through a hole in the wall.

An hour after midnight on one of those silent tropic nights when naught is heard but the muffled boom of the ocean swell on the outer reef, a shot rang out through the sleeping village, and then a long wail as of some one in mortal agony or terror. Leger, the Canadian carpenter at Macfarlane's store, was, in company with Alvord the Swearer, and Pedro the Publican, and many of us general sinners, up late at the kava-bowl when Leva, the prettiest girl on the

At the Ebbing of the Tide.

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Point, and the most notorious *nymphe du beach* in Apia (there are no pavements in Samoa), dashed in amongst us with the announcement that "Luisa was dead." In another ten seconds we kava-drinkers, with unsteady legs but clear heads, were outside on our way to Black Tom's house, which was within pistol-shot.

An old man with a throat cut from ear to ear is not a cheerful sight at any time, and we turned quickly away from where he lay on the once spotless white bed, now an ensanguined horror, to look at poor Luisa, who lay on a mat on the floor, gasping out her brief young life. Her head was pillowed on her mother's bosom, and down her side the blood ran from the jagged bullet-hole. On a chair sat the herculean figure of Black Tom with his face in his hands, through which splashed heavy tears. Slowly he rocked himself to and fro in the manner of his race when strongly moved; and when he tried to speak there only struck upon our ears a horrible gasping noise that somehow made us turn again to the awful thing on the bed to see if it had aught to say upon the matter.

Luisa spoke but little. The kind-faced, quiet-voiced missionary doctor told her that which she already knew too well; and then we drew away while he spoke of other things, and we saw the look of dread and horror on the comely young face pass away and a faint smile part the lips that were already touched by the grim shadow of coming dissolution. Some of her village playmates and companions, with wet cheeks, bent their faces and touched her lips with theirs, and to each she sighed a low *To Fa* of farewell,

and then she looked toward the shaking bent figure in the chair and beckoned him over. With noiseless tread he came, and then, with her very soul looking at him from her great, death-stricken eyes, she murmured, "Fear not, my father, my mouth is covered by the hand of Death; farewell!"

The sound of the soft lapping of the falling tide came through the open window as Luisa spoke again to Toë-o-le-Sasa, the Maid of Apia—"E Toe, *e pae afea te tai?*" ("When is the tide out?") And the girl answered with a sob in her throat, "In quite a little while, O friend of my heart."

"*Ua lelei.* (It is well.) And as the waters run out so does my soul float away!" and she turned her face to her mother's bosom. And as we went softly out from the room and stood upon the path with the lofty palm-plumes rustling above us, we saw the first swirling wave of the incoming tide ripple round Matautu Point and plash on Hamilton's beach. And from within the silent house answered the wail of Death.

Tide.

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The Fallacies of Hilliard.

WITH clenched hand grasping the two letters—the one that sank his last hope of saving his plantation, and the other that blasted his trust in human nature—Hilliard, the planter of Nairai Viwa, walked with quick, firm step to his house, and sat down to think awhile. The great cotton “burst-up” had ruined most men in Fiji, and although long delayed in his case the blow had crushed him utterly.

An angry flush tinged his set features for a few seconds as he re-read the curt, almost savage denial, by his father of the “couple of thousand” asked for. “A fool to resign his commission in the Service and go into a thing he knew nothing about, merely to humour the fantastic whim of a woman of fashion who will, no doubt, now sheer very clear of your wrecked fortunes.”

Ten minutes previously when Hilliard, who had thought his father would never see him go under for the sake of a couple of thou., had read these lines he had smiled, even with the despair of broken fortune at his heart, as he looked at the other letter yet unopened.

Kitty, at least, would stick to him. He was not

a maudlin sentimentalist, but the memory of her farewell kisses was yet strong with him ; and his past experiences of woman's weaknesses and his own strength justified him in thinking that in this one woman he had found his pearl of great price.

Then he read her letter ; and as he read the tappa mallets at work in the Fijian houses hard by seemed to thump in unison with the dull beats of his heart as he stared at the correctly-worded and conventionally-expressed lines that mocked at his fond imaginings of but a few breaths back.

Jimmy, the curly-headed half-caste who had brought him his letters from Levuka, had followed in his steps and was sitting, hat in hand, on the sofa before him when Hilliard raised his face. The fixed pallor had left his bronzed cheeks. For an instant the face of another man had passed before him—Lamington, his one-time fellow-officer, whom every one but Hilliard himself looked upon as being first "in the running" with the woman who had pledged herself to him. But, then, Lamington himself had told him that she had refused him, heir to a big fortune as he was, and they had shaken hands, and Lamington had wished him luck in his honest, good-natured fashion. "Perhaps," and here the dark flush mantled his forehead, "he's tried again and she's slung me. And I . . . what a damnably unpleasant and quick intuition of women's ways my old dad has ! I always wondered why such a fiery devil as he was married such a milk-and-water creature as my good mother. By —, I begin to think he went on safe lines, and I on a fallacy !"

The stolid face of Jimmy recalled him to the present. He must give up the plantation and take a berth of some sort. From the sideboard he took a flask of liquor and poured out two big drinks.

"Here, Jimmy, my boy. This is the last drink you'll get on Nairai Viwa. I'm burst up, cleaned out, dead broke, and going to hell generally."

Jimmy grunted and held out his brown hand for the grog. "Yes? I s'pose you'll go to Levuka first? I'll give you a passage in the cutter."

Hilliard laughed with mingled bitterness and sarcasm. "Right, Jimmy. Levuka is much like the other place, and I'll get experience there, if I don't get a billet."

"Here's luck to you, sir, wherever you go," and Jimmy's thick lips glued themselves lovingly to the glass.

Hilliard drank his off quietly, only muttering to himself, "Here's good-bye to the fallacies of hope," and then, being at bottom a man of sense and quick resolution, he packed his traps and at sunset went aboard the cutter. As they rippled along with the first puffs of the land-breeze, he glanced back but once at the lights of Nairai Viwa village that illumined the cutter's wake, and then, like a wise man, the hopes and dreams of the past drifted astern too.

And then for the next two years he drifted about from one group to another till he found an island that suited him well—no other white man lived there.

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II.

The laughing, merry-voiced native children who, with speedy feet, ran to the house of Iliāti, the trader, to tell him that a visitor was coming from the man-of-war, had gathered with panting breath and hushed expectancy at the door as the figure of the naval officer turned a bend in the path, his right hand clasped with a proud air of proprietorship by that of the ten-year-old son of Alberti the Chief.

Iliāti, with a half-angry, half-pleased look, held out his hand.

"Lamington!"

"Hilliard! old fellow. Why didn't you come on board? Are all your old friends forgotten?"

"Pretty nearly, Lamington. Since I came a cropper over that accursed cotton swindle I've not had any inclination to meet any one I knew—especially any one in the Service, but"—and his voice rang honestly, "I always wondered whether you and I would ever meet again."

"Hilliard," and Lamington placed his hand on the trader's shoulder, "I know all about it. And look here, old man. I saw her only two months ago—at her especial request. She sent for me to talk about you."

"Ah!" and the trader's voice sounded coldly, "I thought, long ago, that she had reconsidered her foolish decision of other days and had long since become Mrs. Lamington. But it doesn't interest me, old fellow. Can you drink Fiji rum, Lamington? Haven't anything better to offer you."

"I'll drink anything you've got, old fellow, even liquid Tophet boiled down to a small half-pint; but I want you to listen to me first. I've been a bit of a scoundrel to you, but, by God, old man, I exchanged into the beastly old *Petrel* for this cruise expressly to find you and make a clean breast of it. I promised her I would."

"Confound it all, Lamington, don't harrow your feelings needlessly, and let us have the rum and talk about anything else."

"No, we won't. Look here, Hilliard, it sounds beastly low, but I must get it out. We met again—at a ball in Sydney more than two years ago. Some infernal chattering women were talking a lot of rot about the planters in Fiji having very pretty and privileged native servants—and all that, you know. She fired up and denied it, but came and asked me if it was true, and I was mean enough not to give it a straight denial. How the devil it happened I can't tell you, but we danced a deuce of a lot and I lost my senses and asked her again, and she said 'Yes.' Had she been any other woman but Miss —, I would have concluded that the soft music and all that had dazed her. It does sometimes—lots of 'em; makes the most virtuous wife wish she could be a sinner and resume her normal goodness next day. But Kitty is different. And it was only that infernal twaddle caused it and made her write you that letter. A week hadn't passed before she wrote to me and told me how miserable she was. But I knew all through she didn't care a d—— about me. And that's the way it occurred, old man."

Hilliard's hand met his. "Say no more about it,

Lamington ; it's a *mea matè*, as we say here—a thing that is past."

"But, good God, old fellow, you don't understand. She's written ever so many times to you. No one in Levuka knew where you had gone to ; there's thousands of islands in the South Seas. And this letter here," he held it toward him, "she gave to me, and I promised her on my honour as a man to effect an exchange into the *Petrel* and find you."

"Thanks, Lamington. You always were a good fellow." He laid the letter on the table quietly and rose and got the rum.

A young native girl, with deep lustrous eyes shining from a face of almost childish innocence, had entered the door and stood with one bare and softly-rounded arm clasped round the neck of Alberti's little son. Her lips parted in a smile as Lamington, with a gasping cough, set down his glass after drinking the potent spirit, and she set her brows in mock ferocity at Hilliard who drank his down like an old-time beachcomber.

"By Jove, Hilliard, what an astonishingly pretty face ! She could give any New Orleans creole points. Time you got out of this before some of the Rotumah beauties make you forget things ; and oh, by the way, I'm forgetting things. Remember you are to come aboard and dine with us to-night, and that you're in indifferent health, and that Captain —, of Her Majesty's ship *Petrel*, is going to give you a passage to Sydney."

At an angry sign from Hilliard the girl disappeared. Then he shook his head. "No, Lamington. I

appreciate your kindness, but cannot accept it. I've been here two years now, and Alberti, the principal local chief, thinks no end of me; and he's a deuced fine fellow, and has been as good as ten fathers to me. And I've business matters to attend to as well."

Lamington pressed him no further. "Lucky devil," he thought. "I suppose he'll clear out in the trading schooner to Sydney, next week; be there long before us any way, and I'll find them well over the first stage of married infatuation when I see him next."

Another hour's chat of old times and old shipmates in the *Challenger*, and Lamington, with his honest, clean-shaven face looking into the quiet, impassive features of the ex-officer, had gripped his hand and gone, and Hilliard went over to the house of Alberti, the chief, to drink *kava*—and see the old French priest. From there, an hour afterward, he saw the cruiser with wet, shining sides dip into the long roll of the ocean swell, as with the smoke pouring from her yellow funnel she was lost to sight rounding the point.

Said the son of Alberti to Léla, the innocent-faced girl with the dancing, starlike eyes and red lips, as they stood watching the last curling rings of the steamer's smoke—"And so that is why I knew much of what the *papalagi* from the man-of-war said to your Iliāti; Alberti, my father, has taught me much of your man's tongue. And, look thou, Léla the Cunning, Iliāti hath a wife in his own country!"

"Pah!"—and she shook her long, wavy locks composedly, and then plucked a scarlet hibiscus flower

to stick in front of one of her pretty little cars—
“what does that matter to me, fathead? I am she
here; and when Iliāti goeth away to her she will be
me there. But he loveth me more than any other on
Rotumah, and hath told me that where he goeth I
shall go also. And who knoweth but that if I have a
son he may marry me? Then shalt thou see such a
wedding-feast as only rich people give. And listen—
for why should I not tell thee: 'Tis well to starve thy-
self now, for it may be to-morrow, for look! fathead,
there goeth the priest into thy father's house, and
Iliāti is already there.”

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A Tale of a Mask.

LANNIGAN, who lived on Motukoe, was in debt to his firm. This was partly due to his fondness for trade gin and partly because Bully Hayes had called at the island a month or so back and the genial Bully and he had played a game or two of poker.

"I'll give you your revenge when I come back from the Carolines, Lannigan," said the redoubtable captain as he scooped in every dollar of the trader's takings for the past six months. And Lannigan, grasping his hand warmly and declaring it was a pleasure to be "claned out by a gintleman," bade him good-bye and went to sleep away from home for a day with some native friends. Tariro, his Manhiki wife, had a somewhat violent temper, and during the poker incident had indulged in much vituperative language outside, directed at white men in general and Lannigan in particular.

"See, thou swiller of gin, see what thy folly has brought us to," said the justly-incensed Tariro, when he came back, and with her took stock of his trade goods; "a thousand and five hundred dollars' worth of trade came we here with, and thou hast naught to

show for it but five casks of oil and a few stinking shark-fins ; and surely the ship of the *male* (his firm) will be here this month."

Lannigan was in a bit of a fix. The firm he was trading for on Motukoe didn't do business in the same free-and-easy way as did Bobby Towns' captains and the unconventional Bully Hayes. They made him sign papers, and every time the ship came the rufous-headed Scotch supercargo took stock, and a violent altercation would result over the price of the trade ; but as the trader generally had a big lot of produce for the ship, matters always ended amicably. He—or rather his wife, Tariro—was too good a trader to have an open rupture with, and the wordy warfare always resulted in the trader saying, in his matter-of-fact way, "Well, I suppose it's right enough. You only rob me wanst in twelve months, and I rob the natives here every day of my life. Give me in a case of gin, an' I'll send ye a pig."

But he had never been so much in debt as he was now. Tariro and he talked it over, and hit upon a plan. He was to say, when the ship came, that he had but five casks of oil ; all his trade had been sold for cash, and the cash—a thousand dollars—represented by a bag of copper bolts picked up on the reef from an old wreck, was to be taken off to the ship and accidentally dropped overboard as it was being passed up on deck. This was Lannigan's idea, and Tariro straightway tied up the bolts in readiness in many thicknesses of sail-cloth.

"Here's Lannigan coming," called out the captain

of the trading vessel to the supercargo, a week or so afterwards, "and that saucy Manhiki woman as usual with him, to see that he doesn't get drunk. The devil take such as her! There's no show of getting him tight."

"How are you, Lannigan?" said the supercargo, wiping his perspiring brow. He had just come out of the hold where he had been opening tinned meats, and putting all the "blown" tins he could find into one especial case—for Lannigan. This was what he called "makin' a mairgin for loss on the meats, which didna pay well."

"Fine," said the genial Lannigan, "an' I haven't got but five casks of oil for yez. Devil a drop av oil would the people make when they looked at the bewtiful lot av trade ye gave me last time. They just rushed me wid cash, an' I tuk a matter av a thousand dollars or so in a month."

"Verra guid business," said the supercargo, "but ye made a gran' meestake in selling the guids for Cheelian dollars instead of oil. An' sac I must debit ye wi' a loss of twenty-five par cent. on the money——"

"Chile dollars be damned!" said Lannigan; "all good American dollars — we've had about twenty whaleships here, buyin' pigs an' poultry an' pearl shell."

"Twenty-one ship!" said Tariro, blowing the smoke of her cigarette through her pretty little nose.

"Whaur's the money, onyway?" said the supercargo; "let's get to business, Lannigan. Eh, mon, I've some verro fine beef for ye."

"Get the bag up out of the boat, Tariro," said the

trader; "it's mighty frightened I was havin' so much money in the house at wanst, wid all them rowdy Yankee sailors from the whaleships ashore here."

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There was a great crowd of natives on deck—over a hundred—and the mate was swearing violently at them for getting in his way. The schooner was a very small vessel, and Motukoe being her first place of call for cargo, she was in light trim, having only her trade and a little ballast on board.

"Send those natives away from the galley," he called out to the cook, who was giving some of the young women ship-biscuits in exchange for young cocoanuts; "can't you see the ship keeps flying up in the wind with all those people for'ard!"

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Hekemanu, Lannigan's native "Man Jack," sat in the boat towing alongside, with the bag of "dollars" at his feet. He and all the boat's crew were in the secret. Lannigan owned their souls; besides, they all liked him on Motukoe.

Tariro stood for a moment beside the captain, indulging in the usual broad "chaff," and then leaning over the rail she called out to Hekemanu: *Tu mai te taga tupe* ("give me the bag of money").

The man for'ard hauled on the line to bring the boat alongside the schooner, and Hekemanu stood up with the heavy bag in his hand.

"Hold on there, you fool! If you drop that bag I'll knock your head off," said the skipper. "Here, Mr. Bates, just you jump down and take that money from that native, or he'll drop it, sure."

A Tale of a Mask.

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Before Hekemanu had time to let it fall over the side the mate had jumped into the boat and taken it.

Lannigan, putting his head up out of the little cabin, groaned inwardly as he saw the mate step over the rail with the fateful bag and hand it to the supercargo.

"Be the powers, ye're in a mighty hurry for the money," said Lannigan, roughly, taking it from him, "ye might ax me if I had a mouth on me first."

The supercargo laughed and put a bottle of gin on the table, and Lannigan's fertile brain commenced to work. If he could only get the supercargo out of the cabin for a minute he meant to pick up the bag, and declaring he was insulted get it back into his boat and tell him to come and count it ashore. Then he could get capsized on the reef and lose it. They were always having "barneys," and it would only be looked upon as one of his usual freaks.

"What the deuce is that?" he said, pointing to a hideous, highly-coloured paper mask that hung up in the cabin.

The supercargo handed it to him. "It's for a man in Samoa—a silly, joking body, always playing pranks wi' the natives, and I thoct he would like the thing."

"Bedad, 'tis enough to scare the sowl out av the divil," said Lannigan.

Just then a mob of natives came aft, and the two men in the cabin heard the captain tell them to clear out again. They were saucy and wouldn't go. Hekemanu had told them of the failure of Lannigan's dodge, and they had an idea that the ship would take

him away, and stood by to rescue him at the word of command.

"I'll verra soon hunt them," said the supercargo, with a proud smile, and he put the mask on his face. Tariro made a bolt on deck and called out to the natives that the supercargo was going to frighten them with a mask.

Instead of wild yells of fear and jumping overboard, as he imagined would happen, the natives merely laughed, but edged away for'ard.

The schooner was in quite close to the reef; the water was very deep, and there was no danger of striking. She was under jib and mainsail only, but the breeze was fresh and she was travelling at a great rate. The wind being right off the land the skipper was hugging the reef as closely as possible, so as to bring up and anchor on a five-fathom patch about a mile away.

"Here, quit that fooling," he called out to the supercargo, "and come aft, you fellows! The ship is that much down by the head she won't pay off, with the helm hard up."

One look at the crowd of natives and another at the shore, and a wild idea came into Lannigan's head. He whispered to Tariro, who went up for'ard and said something to the natives. In another ten seconds some of them began to clamber out on the jib-boom, the rest after them.

"Come back!" yelled the skipper, jamming the helm hard up, as the schooner flew up into the wind. "Leggo peak halyards. By G—d! we are running ashore. Leggo throat halyards, too!"

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The mate flew to the halyards, and let go first the peak and then the throat halyards, but it was too late, and, with a swarm of natives packed together for'ard from the galley to the end of the jib-boom, she stuck her nose down, and, with stern high out of the water, like a duck chasing flies, she crashed into the reef—ran ashore dead to windward.

No one was drowned. The natives took good care of the captain, mate, and supercargo, and helped them to save all they could. But Lannigan had a heavy loss—the bag of copper bolts had gone to the bottom.

The Cook of the "Spreetoo Santoo."

A STUDY IN BEACHCOMBERS.

WE were in Kitti Harbour, at Ponape, in the Carolines, when, at breakfast, a bleary-eyed, undersized, more-or-less-white man in a dirty pink shirt and dungaree pants, came below, and, slinging his filthy old hat over to the transoms, shoved himself into a seat between the mate and Jim Garstang, the trader.

"Mornin', captin," said he, without looking at the skipper, and helping himself to about two pounds of curry.

"Morning to you. Who the deuce are you, anyway? Are you the old bummer they call 'Espiritu Santo'?" said Garstang.

"That's me. I'm the man. But I ain't no bummer, don't you b'lieve it. I was tradin' round here in these (lurid) islands afore you coves knowed where Ponape was."

"Are you the skunk that Wardell kicked off the Shenandoah for stealing a bottle of wine?" said the mate.

"That's me. There was goin' ter be trouble over that on'y that the Shennydor got properly well sunk by the *Allybarmer* (history wasn't his forte), and that

— Wardell got d——d well drowned. Hingland haint a-goin' to let no Yankee insult nobody for nuthin'—an' I'm a blessed Englishman. I didn't steal the wine. Yer see, Wardell arst me off to dinner, and then we gets talkin' about polertics, an' I tells 'im 'e wor a lyin' pirut. Then he started foolin' around my woman an' I up with a bottle of wine an'——"

"Whv, you thundering liar," said Garstang, "you stole it out of the ward-room."

"I wouldn't call no man a liar if I was you, Mister —by G——, that Chinaman cook knows how to make curry."

He ate like a starving shark, and between mouthfuls kept up a running fire of lies and blasphemy. When he had eaten three platefuls of curry and drunk enough coffee to scald a pig, the skipper, who was gettin' tired of him, asked him if he had had enough.

Yes, he had had enough breakfast to last him a whole (Australian adjective) week.

"Then clear out on deck and swab the curry off your face, you beast!"

"That's always the way with you tradin' skippers. A stranger don't get no civility unless he comes aboard in a (red-painted) gig with a (crimson) umbrella and a (gory) 'elmet 'at, like a (vermilion) Consul."

The mate seized him, and, running him up the companion way, slung him out on deck.

"What do you think of him?" asked the skipper, a man fond of a joke—it was Bully Hayes. "I thought I'd let you all make his acquaintance. He's been bumming around the Ladronez and Pelews since

'50; used to be cook on a Manilla trading brig, the *Espiritu Santo*."

Then he told us how this wandering mass of blasphemy got his name of "Spreetoo Santoo." While in the brig he had been caught smuggling at Guam by the guarda costas, and had spent a year or two in the old prison fort at San Juan de 'Apra. (I don't know how he got out: perhaps his inherently alcoholic breath and lurid blasphemy made the old brick wall tumble down.)

After that he was always welcome in sailors' fo'c's'les by reason of his smuggling story, which would commence with—"When I was cook on the *Espiritu Santo*" (only he used the English instead of the Spanish name) "I got jugged by the gory gardy costers," &c., &c.

When we came on deck he was sitting on the main-hatch with the Chinese carpenter—whose pipe he was smoking—and telling him that he ought to get rid of his native wife, who was a Gilbert Island girl, and buy a Ponape girl.

"I can git yer the pick o' the (crimson) island, an' it won't cost yer more'n a few (unprintable) dollara. I'm a (bad word) big man 'ere among the (adjective) natives."

Hung looked up at him stolidly with half-closed eyes. Then he took the pipe out of his mouth and said in a deadly cold voice—

"You palally liar, Spleetoo."

He slouched aft again presently, and asked the mate,

in an amiable tone of voice, if he had "any (ruddy) noospapers from Sydney."

"What the devil do *you* want newspapers for?" inquired Hayes, turning round suddenly in his deck-chair, "you can't read, Spreetoo."

"Can't read, eh?" and his red-rimmed, lashless eyes simulated intense indignation. "Wot about that 'ere (red) bishop at Manilla, as wanted me to chuck up me (scarlet) billet on the *Spreetoo Santoo* and travel through the (carnaged) Carryline Grewp as 's (sanguinary) sekketerry? 'Cos why? 'Cos there ain't any (blank) man atween 'ere an' 'ell as can talk the warios lingoos like me."

"Here," said the mate, giving him two or three old Maoriland newspapers—"here's some Auckland papers. Know anybody there?"

"No," he answered, promptly, "not a soul, but he knowed Sydney well. Larst time I was there I sold old Bobby Towns £6,000 worth of oil—a bloomin' shipful. I got drunk, an' a (blank) policeman went through me in the cell and took the whole blessed lot outer me (scarlet) pocket." (Nine bad words omitted.)

"Bank notes?" queried Bully.

"No, sov'reigns—(gory) sov'reigns."

He asked us if we had seen any men-o'-war about lately, and said that the captain of H.M.S. — had wanted to marry his daughter, but he wouldn't let her marry no man-o'-war cove after the way that — Wardell had treated him. He thought he would go back to Sydney again for a spell. His brother had a flaming fine billet there.

"What is he?" asked Hayes.

"'E's a (blessed) Soopreme Court Judge, wears a (gory) wig big enough to make chafin' gear for a (crimson) fleet o' ships; 'e lives at Guvment 'Ouse, and 'e's rollin' in money an' drinks like a (carmine) fish. I thought I might see somethin' about the — in a (blank) Sydney noospaper. I'll come in for all his (ensanguined) money when 'e dies."

Bully gave him a bottle of gin after a while. Then he hurriedly bade us farewell and went ashore.

Lupton's Guest : a Memory of the Eastern Pacific.

A LONG sweeping curve of coast, fringed with tall plumed palms casting wavering shadows on the yellow sand as they sway and swish softly to the breath of the brave trade-wind that whistles through the thickly-verdured hummocks on the weather side of the island, to die away into a soft breath as, after passing through the belt of cocoanuts, it faintly ripples the transparent depths of the lagoon—a broad sheet of blue and silver stretching away from the far distant western line of reef to the smooth, yellow beach at the foot of the palms on the easternmost islet. And here, beneath their lofty crowns, are the brown thatched huts of the people and the home of Lupton the trader.

This is Mururea. And, if it be possible, Mururea surpasses in beauty any other of the "cloud of islands" which, lying on the blue bosom of the Eastern Pacific like the islands of a dream, are called by their people the Paumotu. And these people—it is not of very long ago I speak—are a people unto themselves. Shy and suspicious of strangers, white or brown, and endued with that quick instinct of fear

which impels untutored minds to slay, and which we, in our civilised ignorance, call savage treachery, they are yet kind-hearted and hospitable to those who learn their ways and regard their customs. A tall, light-skinned, muscular people, the men with long, straight, black hair, coiled up in a knot at the back, and the women—the descendants of those who sailed with broken Fletcher Christian and his comrades of the *Bounty* in quest of a place where to die—soft-voiced, and with big, timorous eyes.

'Twas here that Ben Peese, the handsome, savagely humorous, and voluble colleague of Captain "Bully" Hayes, the modern rover of the South Seas, one day appeared. Lupton, with his son and two natives, were out searching the beach of a little islet for turtles' eggs, when the boy, who had been sent to obtain a few young drinking cocoanuts from a tree some little distance away, called out, "*Tē Pahi!*" (a ship). A few minutes passed, and then, outlined against the narrow strip of cocoanuts that grew on the north end of the main islet of the lagoon, Lupton saw the sails of a schooner making for the only opening—a narrow passage on the eastern side.

Now vessels came but rarely to Mururea, for Du Petit Thouars, the French Admiral of the Pacific fleet, had long since closed the group to the Sydney trading ships that once came there for pearl-shell, and Lupton felt uneasy. The vessel belonging to the Tahitian firm for whom he traded was not due for many months. Could the stranger be that wandering Ishmael of the sea—Peese? Only he—or his equally daring and dreaded colleague, Bully Hayes—would

dare to sail a vessel of any size in among the coral "mushrooms" that studded the current-swept waters of the dangerous passage.

What did he want? And honest Frank Lupton, a quiet and industrious trader, thought of his store of pearl-shell and felt still more doubtful. And he knew Peese so well, the dapper, handsome little Englishman with the pleasant voice that had in it always a ripple of laughter—the voice and laugh that concealed his tigerish heart and savage vindictiveness. Lupton had children too—sons and daughters—and Peese, who looked upon women as mere articles of merchandise, would have thought no more of carrying off the trader's two pretty daughters than he would of "taking" a cask of oil or a basket of pearl-shell.

His anxious face, paling beneath the tropic bronze of twenty years' ocean wanderings, betrayed his feelings to the two natives who were now pulling the boat with all their strength to gain the village, and one—Maora, his wife's brother, a big, light-skinned man, with that keen, hawk-like visage peculiar to the people of the eastern islands of Polynesia, said—

"Tis an evil day, Farani! No ship but that of the Little Man with the Beard hath ever passed into the lagoon since the great English fighting ship came inside" (he spoke of 1863), "for the reef hath grown and spread out and nearly closed it. Only the Little Bearded Devil would dare it, for he hath been here twice with the Man of the Strong Hand" (Hayes). "And, Farani, listen! 'The hand to the club!'"

They ceased pulling. From the village came the

sound of an almost forgotten cry—a signal of danger to the dwellers under the palms—"The hand to the club!"—meaning for the men to arm.

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Lupton hesitated. The natives would, he knew, stand to him to a man if violence to or robbery of him were attempted. But to gain the village he must needs pass close the vessel, and to pass on and not board her would savour of cowardice—and Lupton was an Englishman, and his twenty years' wanderings among the dangerous people of some of the islands of the Paumotu Group had steeled his nerves to meet any danger or emergency. So, without altering the course of the boat, he ran alongside of the vessel—which was a brigantine—just as she was bringing to, and looking up, he saw the face he expected.

"How are you, Lupton, my dear fellow?" said Peese, as the trader gained the deck, wringing his hand effusively, as if he were a long-lost brother. "By Heavens! I'm glad to meet a countryman again, and that countryman Frank Lupton. Don't like letting your hand go." And still grasping the trader's rough hand in his, delicate and smooth as a woman's, he beamed upon him with an air of infantile pleasure.

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This was one of Peese's peculiarities—an affectation of absolute affection for any Englishman he met, from the captain of a man-of-war (these, however, he avoided as much as possible), to a poor beachcomber with but a grass girdle round his loins.

"What brings you here, Captain Peese?" said

Lupton, bluntly, as his eye sought the village, and saw the half-naked figures of his native following leaving his house in pairs, each carrying between them a square box, and disappearing into the *pata* scrub. It was his pearl-shell. Mameri, his wife, had scented danger, and the shell at least was safe, however it befell. Peese's glance followed his, and the handsome little captain laughed, and slapped the gloomy-faced and suspicious trader on the back with an air of *camaraderie*.

"My dear fellow, what an excessively suspicious woman your good Mameri is! But do not be alarmed. I have not come here to do any business this time, but to land a passenger, and as soon as his traps are on the beach I'm off again to Maga Reva. Such are the exigencies, my dear Lupton, of a trading captain's life in the South Seas, I cannot even spare the time to go on shore with you and enjoy the hospitality of the good Mameri and your two fair daughters. But come below with me and see my passenger." And he led the way to his cabin.

The passenger's appearance, so Lupton told me, "was enough to make a man's blood curdle," so ghastly pale and emaciated was he. He rose as Lupton entered and extended his hand.

"My friend here," said the worthy little Ishmael, bowing and caressing his long silky beard, "is, ah, hum, Mr. Brown. He is, as you will observe, my dear Lupton, in a somewhat weak state of health, and is in search of some retired spot where he may recuperate sufficiently——"

"Don't lie unnecessarily, sir."

Peese bowed affably and smiled, and the stranger addressed Lupton.

"My name is not Brown—'tis of no consequence what it is ; but I am, indeed, as you see, in a bad way, with but a few months at most to live. Captain Peese, at my request, put into this lagoon. He has told me that the place is seldom visited by ships, and that the people do not care about strangers. Yet, have you, Mr. Lupton, any objections to my coming ashore here, and living out the rest of my life? I have trade goods sufficient for all requirements, and will in no way interfere with or become a charge upon you."

Lupton considered. His influence with the people of Mururea was such that he could easily overcome their objections to another white man landing ; but he had lived so long apart from all white associations that he did not care about having the even monotony of his life disturbed. And then, he thought, it might be some queer game concocted between the sick man and the chattering little sea-hawk that sat beside him stroking and fondling his flowing beard. He was about to refuse when the sunken, eager eyes of "Mr. Brown" met his in an almost appealing look that disarmed him of all further suspicion.

"Very well, sir. The island is as free to you as to me. But, still, I *could* stop any one else from living here if I wished to do so. But you do look very ill, no mistake about that. And, then, you ain't going to trade against me ! And I suppose you'll pass me your word that there isn't any dodge between you and the captain here to bone my shell and clear out !"

For answer the sick man opened a despatch-box that lay on the cabin table, and took from it a bag of money.

"This," he said, "is the sum I agreed to pay Captain Peese to land me on any island of my choice in the Paumotu Archipelago, and this unsigned order here is in his favour on the *Maison Brander* of Tahiti for a similar sum."

Signing the paper he pushed it with the money over to Peese, and then went on :—

"I assure you, Mr. Lupton, that this is the only transaction I have ever had with Captain Peese. I came to him in Tahiti, hearing he was bound to the Paumotu Group. I had never heard of him before, and after to-day I will not, in all human probability, see him again."

"Perfectly correct, my dear sir," said Peese. "And now, as our business is finished, perhaps our dear friend, Lupton, will save me the trouble of lowering a boat by taking you ashore in his own, which is alongside."

Five minutes later and Lupton and the stranger were seated in the boat.

"Good-bye, my dear Lupton, and *adieu* my dear Mr. Brown. I shall ever remember our pleasant relations on board my humble little trading vessel," cried—, the renowned Peese, who, from former associations, had a way of drifting into the Spanish tongue—and prisons and fetters—which latter he once wore for many a weary day on the cruiser *Hernandez Pizarro* on his way to the gloomy prison of Manilla.

The boat had barely traversed half the distance to

the shore ere the brigantine's anchor was hove-up and at her bows, and then Peese, with his usual cool assurance, beat her through the intricate passage and stood out into the long roll of the Pacific.

When Lupton, with his "walking bone bag," as he mentally called the stranger, entered his house, Mameri, his bulky native wife, uttered an exclamation of pity, and placing a chair before him uttered the simple word of welcome *Iorana!* and the daughters, with wonder-lit star-like eyes, knelt beside their father's chair and whispered, "Who is he, Farani?"

And Lupton could only answer, "I don't know, and won't ask. Look to him well."

He never did ask. One afternoon nearly a year afterwards, as Lupton and Trenton, the supercargo of the *Marama*, sat on an old native *maras* at Arupahi, the Village of Four Houses, he told the strange story of his sick guest.

The stranger had at first wished to have a house built for himself, but Lupton's quiet place and the shy and reserved natures of his children made him change his intention and ask Lupton for a part of his house. It was given freely—where are there more generous-hearted men than these world-forgotten, isolated traders?—and here the Silent Man, as the people of Mururea called him, lived out the few months of his life. That last deceptive stage of his insidious disease had given him a fictitious strength. On many occasions, accompanied by the trader's children, he would walk to the north point of the low-lying island, where the cloudy spume of the surge was

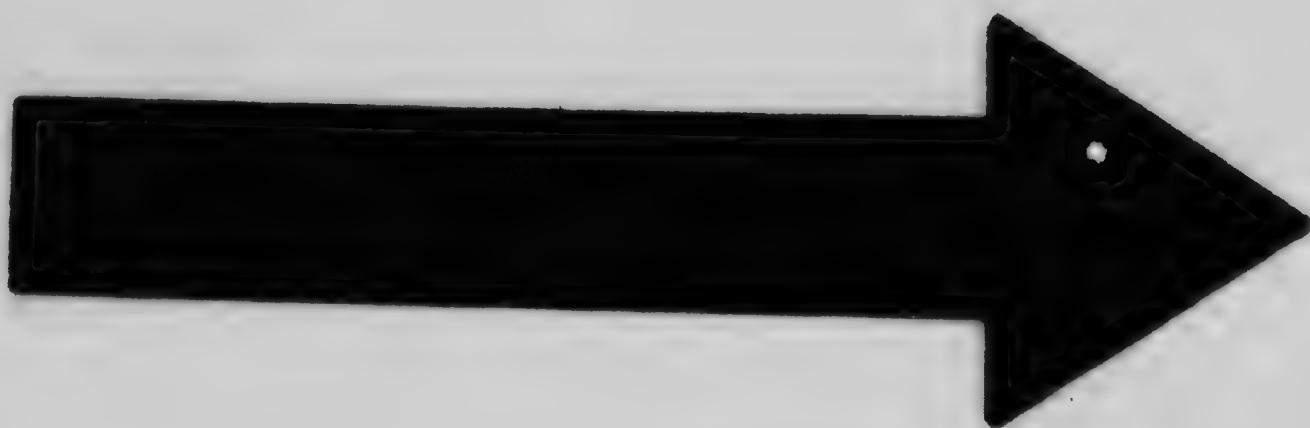
thickest and where the hollow and resonant crust of the black reef was perforated with countless air-holes, through which the water hissed and roared, and shot high in air, to fall again in misty spray.

And here, with dreamy eyes, he would sit under the shade of a clump of young cocoanuts, and watch the boil and tumble of the surf, whilst the children played with and chased each other about the clinking sand. Sometimes he would call them to him—Farani the boy, and Teremai and Lorani, the sweet-voiced and tender-eyed girls—and ask them to sing to him; and in their soft semi-Tahitian dialect they would sing the old songs that echoed in the ears of the desperate men of the *Bounty* that fatal dawn when, with bare-headed, defiant Bligh drifting astern in his boat, they headed back for Tahiti and death.

Four months had passed when one day the strange white man, with Lupton's children, returned to the village. As they passed in through the doorway with some merry chant upon their lips, they saw a native seated on the matted floor. He was a young man, with straight, handsome features, such as one may see any day in Eastern Polynesia, but the children, with terrified faces, shrank aside as they passed him and went to their father.

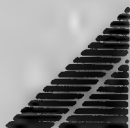
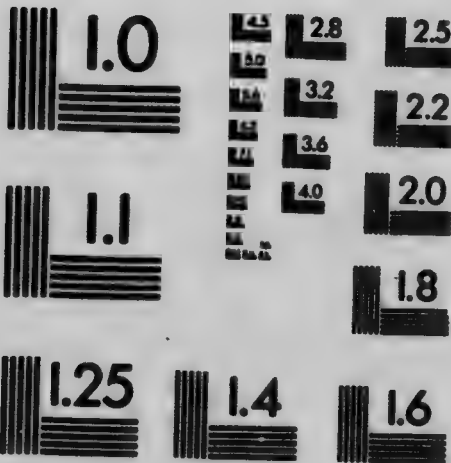
The pale face of the Silent Man turned inquiringly to Lupton, who smiled.

"'Tis Māmēri's teaching, you know. She is a Catholic from Magareva, and prays and tells her beads enough to work a whaleship's crew into heaven. But this man is a 'Soul Catcher,' and if any one of us here got sick, Māmēri would let the faith she was



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reared in go to the wall and send for the 'Soul Catcher'. He's a kind of an all-round prophet, wizard, a general wisdom merchant. Took over the soul catching business from his father—runs in the family you know."

"Ah!" said the Silent Man in his low, languid tones, looking at the native, who, the moment he had entered had bent his eyes to the ground, "and in which of his manifold capacities has he come to see you, Lupton?"

Lupton hesitated a moment, then laughed.

"Well, sir, he says he wants to speak to you. Wants to *pahihi* (talk rot), I suppose. It's his trade you know. I'd sling him out only that he isn't a bad sort of a fellow—and a bit mad—and Mameri says he'll quit as soon as he has had his say."

"Let him talk," said the calm, quiet voice; "I like these people, and like to hear them talk—better than I would most white men."

Then, with his dark, dilated eyes moving from the pale face of the white man to that of Lupton, the native wizard and Seer of Unseen Things spoke. Then again his eyes sought the ground.

"What does he say?" queried Lupton's guest.

"D—— rot," replied the trader, angrily.

"Tell me exactly, if you please. I feel interested."

"Well, he says that he was asleep in his house when his 'spirit voice' awoke him and said"—here Lupton paused and looked at his guest, and then, seeing the faint smile of amused interest on his melancholy features, resumed, in his rough, jocular way—"and said—the 'spirit voice,' you know—that your soul was struggling to get loose, and is going away from you

to-night. And the long and short of it is that this young fellow here wants to know if you'll let him save it—keep you from dying, you know. Says he'll do the job for nothing, because you're a good man, and a friend to all the people of Mururea."

"Mr. Brown" put his thin hand across his mouth, and his eyes smiled at Lupton. Then some sudden, violent emotion stirred him, and he spoke with such quick and bitter energy that Lupton half rose from his seat in vague alarm.

"Tell him," he said—"that is, if the language expresses it—that my soul has been in hell these ten years, and its place filled with ruined hopes and black despair," and then he sank back on his couch of mats, and turned his face to the wall.

The Seer of Unseen Things, at a sign from the now angry Lupton, rose to his feet. As he passed the trader he whispered—

"Be not angry with me, Farani; art not thou and all thy house dear to me, the Snarer of Souls and Keeper Away of Evil Things? And I can truly make a snare to save the soul of the Silent Man, if he so wishes it." The low, impassioned tones of the wizard's voice showed him to be under strong emotion, and Lupton, with smoothened brow, placed his hand on the native's chest in token of amity.

"Farani," said the wizard, "see'st thou these?" and he pointed to where, in the open doorway, two large white butterflies hovered and fluttered. They were a species but rarely seen in Mururea, and the natives had many curious superstitions regarding them.

"Aye," said the trader, "what of them?"

"Lo, they are the spirits that await the soul of him

who sitteth in thy house. One is the soul of a woman the other of a man ; and their bodies are long ago dust in a far-off land. See, Farani, they hover and wait, wait, wait. To-morrow they will be gone, but there another may be with them."

Stopping at the doorway the tall native turned, and again his strange, full black eyes fixed upon the figure of Lupton's guest. Then slowly he untied from a circlet of polished pieces of pearl-shell strung together round his sinewy neck a little round leaf-wrapped bundle. And with quiet assured step he came and stood before the strange white man and extended his hand.

"Take it, O man, with the swift hand and the strong heart, for it is thine."

And then he passed slowly out.

Lupton could only see that as the outside wrappings of *fala* leaves fell off they revealed a black substance, when Mr. Brown quickly placed it in the bosom of his shirt.

"And sure enough," continued Lupton, knocking the ashes from his pipe out upon the crumbling stones of the old marae, and speaking in, for him, strangely softened tones, "the poor chap did die that night, leastways at *kalaga moa* (cockcrow), and then he refilled his pipe in silence, gazing the while away out to the North-West Point."

"What a curious story !" began the supercargo, after an interval of some minutes, when he saw that Lupton, usually one of the merriest-hearted wanderers that rove to and fro in Polynesia, seemed strangely silent and affected, and had turned his face from him.

He waited in silence till the trader chose to speak again.

Away to the westward, made purple by the sunset haze of the tropics, lay the ever-hovering spume-cloud of the reef of North-West Point—the loved haunt of Lupton's guest—and the muffled boom of the ceaseless surf deepened now and then as some mighty roller tumbled and crashed upon the flat ledges of blackened reef.

At last the trader turned again to the supercargo, almost restored to his usual equanimity. "I'm a pretty rough case, Mr. —, and not much given to any kind of sentiment or squirming, but I would give half I'm worth to have him back again. He sort of got a pull on my feelin's the first time he ever spoke to me, and as the days went on, I took to him that much that if he'd a wanted to marry my little Teremai I'd have given her to him cheerful. Not that we ever done much talkin', but he'd sit night after night and make me talk, and when I'd spun a good hour's yarn he'd only say, 'Thank you, Lupton, good-night,' and give a smile all round to us, from old Māmeri to the youngest *tama*, and go to bed. And yet he did a thing that'll go hard agin' him, I fear."

"Ah," said Trenton, "and so he told you at the last—I mean his reason for coming to die at Mururea."

"No, he didn't. He only told me something; Peese told me the rest. And he laughed when he told me," and the dark-faced trader struck his hand on his knee. "Peese would laugh if he saw his mother crucified."

"Was Peese back here again, then?" inquired Trenton.

"Yes, two months ago. He hove-to outside, and came ashore in a canoe. Said he wanted to hear how his dear friend Brown was. He only stayed an hour and then cleared out again."

"Did he die suddenly?" the supercargo asked, his mind still bent on Lupton's strange visitor.

"No. Just before daylight he called me to him—with my boy. He took the boy's hand and said he'd have been glad to have lived after all. He had been happy in a way with me and the children here in Mururea. Then he asked to see Teremai and Lorani. They both cried when they saw he was a goin'—all native-blooded people do that if they cares anything at all about a white man, and sees him dyin'."

"Have you any message, or anything to say in writin', sir?" I says to him.

He didn't answer at once, only took the girl's hands in his, and kisses each of 'em on the face, then he says, "No, Lupton, neither. But send the children away now. I want you to stay with me to the last—which will be soon."

Then he put his hand under his pillow, and took out a tiny little parcel, and held it in his closed hand.

"Mr. Lupton, I ask you before God to speak honestly. Have you, or have you not, ever heard of me, and why I came here to die, away from the eyes of men?"

"No, sir," I said. "Before God I know no more of you now than the day I first saw you."

"Can you, then, tell me if the native soul-doctor

who came here last night is a friend of Captain Peese? Did he see Peese when I landed here? Has he talked with him?"

"No. When you came here with Peese, the soul-seer was away at another island. And as for talking with him, how could he? Peese can't speak two words of Paumotu."

He closed his eyes a minute. Then he reached out his hand to me and said, "Look at that; what is it?"

It was the little black thing that the Man Who Sees Beyond gave him, and was a curious affair altogether. "You know what an *aitu taliga* is?" asked Lupton.

"Yes; a 'devil's ear'—that's what the natives call fungus."

"Well," continued Lupton, "this was a piece of dried fungus, and yet it wasn't a piece of fungus. It was the exact shape of a human heart—just as I've seen a model of it made of wax. That hadn't been its natural shape, but the sides had been brought together and stitched with human hair—by the soul-doctor, of course. I looked at it curiously enough, and gave it back to him. His fingers closed round it again."

"What is it?" he says again.

"It's a model of a human heart," says I, "made of fungus."

"My God!" he says, "how could he know?" Then he didn't say any more, and in another half-hour or so he dies, quiet and gentlemanly like. I looked for the heart with Mameri in the morning—it was gone.

"Well, we buried him. And now look here Mr. —, as sure as I believe there's a God over us I believe that that native soul-catcher *has* dealings with the Devil. I had just stowed the poor chap in his coffin and was going to nail it down when the kanaka wizard came in, walks up to me, and says he wants to see the dead man's hand. Just to humour him I lifted off the sheet. The soul-catcher lifted the dead man's hands carefully, and then I'm d——d if he didn't lay that dried heart on his chest and press the hands down over it."

"What's that for?" says I.

"'Tis the heart of the woman he slew in her sleep. Let it lie with him, so that there may be peace between them at last," and then he glides away without another word.

"I let it stay, not thinking much of it at the time. Well, as I was tellin' you, Peece came again. Seeing that I had all my people armed, I treated him well and we had a chat, and then I told him all about 'Mr. Brown's' death and the soul-saver and the dried heart. And then Peece laughs and gives me this newspaper cutting. I brought it with me to show you."

Trenton took the piece of paper and read.

"Lester Mornington made his escape from the State prison at San Quentin (Cal.) last week, and is stated to be now on his way either to Honolulu or Tahiti. It has been ascertained that a vast sum of money has been disbursed in a very systematic manner during the last few weeks to effect his release. Although nearly eight years have elapsed since he

committed his terrible crime, the atrocious nature of it will long be remembered. Young, wealthy, respected, and talented, he had been married but half a year when the whole of the Pacific Slope was startled with the intelligence that he had murdered his beautiful young wife, who had, he found, been disloyal to him.

"Entering the bedroom he shot his sleeping wife through the temples, and then with a keen-edged knife had cut out her still-beating heart. This, enclosed in a small box, he took to the house of the man who had wronged him, and desired him to open it and look at the contents. He did so, and Mornington, barely giving him time to realise the tragedy, and that his perfidy was known, shot him twice, the wounds proving fatal next day. The murderer made good his escape to Mexico, only returning to California a month ago, when he was recognised (although disguised) and captured, and at the time of his escape was within two days of the time of his trial before Judge Crittenden."

"There's always a woman in these things," said Lupton, as the supercargo gave him back the slip. "Come on."

And he got down from his seat on the wall. "There's Mameri calling us to *kaikai*—stewed pigeons. She's a bully old cook; worth her weight in Chile dollars."

In Nouméa.

CHESTER was listening to those charming musicians, the convict band, playing in Nouméa, and saw in the crowd a man he knew—more, an old friend, S——. The recognition was mutual and pleasing to both. They had not met for six years. He was then chief officer of a China steamer; now he was captain of a big tramp steamer that had called in to load nickel ore. “Who,” exclaimed Chester, “would ever have thought of meeting *you* here?”

He laughed and replied: “I came with a purpose. You remember Miss ——, to whom I was engaged in Sydney?”

Chester nodded, expecting from the sparkle in S——’s dark brown eye that he was going to hear a little gush about her many wifely qualities.

“Well, I was in Sydney three times after I saw you. We were to be married as soon as I got a command. Two years ago I was there last. She had got married. Wrote me a letter saying she knew my calmer judgment would finally triumph over my anger—she had accepted a good offer, and although I might be nettled, perhaps, at first, yet she was sure my good sense would applaud her decision

in marrying a man who, although she could never love him as she loved me, was very rich. But she would always look forward to meeting me again. That was all."

"Hard lines," said Chester.

"My dear boy, I thought that at first, when her letter knocked me flat aback. But I got over it, and I swore I would pay her out. And I came to this den of convicts to do it, and I did it—yesterday. She is here."

"Here?" said Chester.

And then he learnt the rest of Captain S——'s story. A year after his lady-love had jilted him he received a letter from her in England. She was in sad trouble, she said. Her husband, a Victorian official, was serving five years for embezzlement. Her letter was suggestive of a desire to hasten to the "protection" of her sailor lover. She wished, she said, that her husband were dead. But dead or alive she would always hate *him*.

S—— merely acknowledged her letter and sent her £25. In another six months he got a letter from Fiji. She was a governess there, she said, at £75 a year. Much contrition and love, also, in this letter. S—— sent another £25, and remarked that he would see her soon. Fate one day sent him to take command of a steamer in Calcutta bound to Fiji with coolies, thence to Nouméa to load nickel ore. And all the way out across the tropics S——'s heart was leaping at the thought of seeing his lost love—and telling her that he hated her for her black frozen treachery.

As soon as he had landed his coolies he cautiously

set about discovering the family with whom she lived. No one could help him, but a planter explained matters: "I know the lady for whom you inquire, but she doesn't go by that name. Ask any one about Miss ——, the barmaid. She has gone to New Caledonia."

He asked, and learned that she was well known, and S—— wondered why she had brought her beauty to such a climate as that of Fiji when it would have paid her so much better to parade it in Melbourne.

The evening of the day on which his steamer arrived at Nouméa a man brought him a letter. He showed it to Chester.

MY DARLING WILL,—Thank God you have come, for surely you have come for me—my heart tells me so. For God's sake wait on board for me. I will come at eight. To live in this place is breaking my heart. Ever yours,——

She came. He stood her kisses passively, but gave none in return, until she asked him to kiss her. "When you are my wife," he said, evasively. And then—she must have loved him—she burst out into passionate sobs and fell at his feet in the quiet cabin and told him of her debased life in Fiji. "But, as God hears me, Will, that is all past since your last letter. I was mad. I loved money and did not care how I got it. I left Fiji to come here, intending to return to Australia. But, Will, dear Will, if it is only to throw me overboard, take me away from this hell upon earth. For your sake, Will, I have resisted them here, although I suffer daily, hourly, torture

and insult. I have no money, and I am afraid to die and end my sufferings."

Captain S——, speaking calmly and slowly, placed money in her hand and said, "You must not see me again till the day I am ready for sea. Then bring your luggage and come on board."

With a smothered sob bursting from her, despite the joy in her heart, the woman turned and left him. Then S—— went up to the Café Palais and played billiards with a steady hand.

There was a great number of people on board to see Captain S—— away. Presently a boat came alongside, and a young lady with sweet red lips and shiny hair ascended to the deck.

"Hélas !" said a French officer to S——, "and so you are taking away the fair one who won't look at us poor exiles of Nouvelle."

With a timid smile and fast-beating heart the woman gained the quarter-deck. In front of her stood the broad-shouldered, well-groomed Captain S——, cold, impassive, and deadly pale, with a cruel joy in his breast.

The woman stood still. There was something so appalling in that set white face before her, that her slight frame quivered with an unknown dread. And then the captain spoke, in slow, measured words that cut her to her inmost soul.

"Madam, I do not take passengers !"

No answer. Only short, gasping breaths as she steadied her hand on the rail.

And then, turning to one of the Frenchmen :
"M. —, will you request this—this lady to go on

shore? She is known to me as a woman of infamous reputation in Fiji. I cannot for a moment entertain the idea of having such a person on board my ship."

Before the shuddering creature fell a man caught her, and then she was placed in the boat and taken ashore. Of course some of the Frenchmen thought it right to demand an explanation from S——, who said—

"I've none to give, gentlemen. If any of you want to fight me, well and good, although I don't like quarrelling over a pavement-woman. Besides, I rather think you'll find that the lady will *now* be quite an acquisition to you."

But S——'s revenge was not complete. He had previously arranged matters with his engineer, who presently came along and announced an accident to the machinery—the steamer would be delayed a couple of days. He wanted to see her again—so he told Chester.

"It was a cruel thing," said his friend.

"Bah!" said S——, "come with me."

In the crowded bar of the café a woman was laughing and talking gaily. Something made her look up. She put her hand to her eyes and walked slowly from the room.

As the two Englishmen walked slowly down to the wharf the handsome Captain S—— whistled cheerily, and asked Chester on board to hear him and his steward play violin and piccolo.

"By God, S——," said Chester, "you have no heart!"

"Right you are, my lad. She made it into stone.

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In Nouméa.

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But it won't hurt her as it did me. You see, these Frenchmen here pay well for new beauty ; and women love money—which is a lucky thing for many men."

The Feast at Pentecost.

THERE was a row in the fo'c's'le of the *Queen Caroline*, barque, of Sydney, and the hands were discussing ways and means upon two subjects—making the skipper give them their usual allowance of rum, or killing him, burning the ship, and clearing out and living among the natives.

Half of the crew were white, the others were Maories, Line Islanders, and Hawaiians. The white men wanted the coloured ones to knock the skipper and two mates on the head, while they slept. The natives declined—but they were quite agreeable to run away on shore with their messmates.

The barque was at anchor at one of the New Hebrides. She was a "sandalwooder," and the captain, Fordham, was, if possible, a greater rascal than any one else on board. He had bargained with the chief of the island for leave to send his crew ashore and cut sandalwood, and on the first day four boatloads were brought off, whereupon Fordham cursed their laziness. One, an ex-Hobart Town convict, having "talked back," Fordham and the mate tied him up to the pumps and gave him three dozen,

Next day he started the boats away during fierce rain-squalls, and told the men that if they didn't bring plenty of wood he would "haze" them properly.

At dusk they returned and brought word that they had a lot of wood cut, but had left it ashore as the natives would lend them no assistance to load the boats.

The spokesman on this occasion was a big Maori from the Bay of Islands. Fordham gave him three dozen and put him in irons. Then he told the men they would get no supper till the wood was in the barque's hold—and he also stopped their grog.

"Well," said the captain, eyeing them savagely, "what is it going to be? Are you going to get that wood off or not?"

"It's too dark," said one; "and, anyway, we want our supper and grog first."

Fordham made a step towards him, when the whole lot bolted below.

"They'll turn-to early enough to-morrow," said he, grimly, "when they find there's no breakfast for 'em until that wood's on deck." Then he went below to drink rum with his two mates, remarking to his first officer: "You mark my words, Colliss, we're going to have a roasting hot time of it with them fellows here at Pentecost!"

At daylight next morning the mate, who was less of a brute than the skipper, managed to get some rum and biscuit down into the fo'c's'le; then they turned-to and manned the boats. At noon the second mate, who was in charge of the cutting party, signalled from the shore that something was wrong.

On Fordham reaching the shore the second mate told him that all the native crew had run off into the bush.

The chief of the island was sent for, and Fordham told him to catch the runaways—fourteen in number—promising seven muskets in return. The white crew were working close by in sullen silence. They grinned when they heard the chief say it would be difficult to capture the men; they were natives, he remarked—if they were white men it would be easy enough. But he would try if the captain helped him.

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An hour afterwards the chief was in the bush, talking to the deserters, and taking in an account of the vast amount of trade lying on board the barque.

"See," said he, to the only man among them who spoke his dialect—a Fijian half-caste from Loma-loma—"this is my scheme. The captain of the ship and those that come with him will I entice into the bush and kill them one by one, for the path is narrow——"

"Good," said Sam the half-caste, "and then ten of us, with our hands loosely tied, will be taken off to the ship by two score of your men, who will tell the mate that the captain has caught ten of us, and has gone to seek the other four. Then will the ship be ours."

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"Halloa!" said the mate of the barque to the carpenter, "here's a thundering big crowd of niggers coming off in our two boats, and none of our white chaps with 'em. Stand by, you chaps, with your

muskets. I ain't going to let all that crowd aboard with only six men in the ship."

The men left on board watched the progress of the two boats as they were pulled quickly towards the ship. They hardly apprehended any attempt at cutting-off, as from the ship they could discern the figures of some of their shipmates on shore stacking the sandalwood on a ledge of rock, handy for shipping in the boats.

"It's all right," called out the mate presently, "the niggers have collared some of our native chaps. I can see that yaller-hided Fiji Sam sitting aft with his hands lashed behind him. Let 'em come alongside."

"Cap'en been catch him ten men," said the native in charge to the mate, "he go look now find him other fellow four men. He tell me you give me two bottle rum, some tobacco, some biscuit."

"Right you are, you man-catching old cannibal," said the mate, jocosely, "come below." As the mate went below with the native at his heels, the latter made a quick sign by a backward move of his arm. In an instant the ten apparently-bound men had sprung to their feet, and with their pseudo-captors, flung themselves upon the five men. The wild cry of alarm reached the mate in the cabin. He darted up, and as he reached the deck a tomahawk crashed into his brain.

No need to tell the tale of the savage butchery on deck in all its details. Not one of the men had time to even fire a shot—they went down so quickly under the knives and tomahawks of the fifty men who struggled and strove with one another to strike the first blow. One man, indeed, succeeded in reaching

the main rigging, but ere he had gained ten feet he was stabbed and chopped in half-a-dozen places.

And then, as the remaining members of the crew sat "spelling" in the jungle, and waiting for the skipper's return, there came a sudden, swift rush of dark, naked forms upon them. Then gasping groans and silence.

There were many oven-fires lit that night and the following day; and although the former shipmates of the "long, baked pigs" were present by the invitation of the chief, their uncultivated tastes were satisfied with such simple things as breadfruit and yams.

That was the "wiping-out" of the *Queen Caroline* at Pentecost, and the fulfilment of the unconscious prophecy of Captain Fordham to his mate.

An Honour to the Service.

THE Honourable Captain Stanley W—— believed in flogging, and during the three years' cruise of the frigate in the South Pacific he had taken several opportunities of expressing this belief upon the blue-jackets of his ship by practical illustrations of his hobby. He was, however—in his own opinion—a most humane man, and was always ready to give a dozen less if Dr. Cartwright suggested, for instance, that Jenkins or Jones hadn't quite got over his last tricing up, and could hardly stand another dozen so soon. And the chaplain of the frigate, when dining with the Honourable Stanley, would often sigh and shake his head and agree with the captain that the proposed abolition of flogging in the British Navy would do much to destroy its discipline and loosen the feelings of personal attachment between officers and men, and then murmur something complimentary about his Majesty's ship *Pleiades* being one of the very few ships in the Service whose captain still maintained so ancient and honoured a custom, the discontinuance of which could only be advocated by common, illiterate persons—such as the blue-jackets themselves.

The frigate was on her way from Valparaiso to Sydney—it was in the days of Governor Bligh—and for nearly three weeks had been passing amongst the low-lying coral islands of the Paumotu or Low Archipelago, when one afternoon in May, 182— she lay becalmed off the little island of Vairaatea. The sea was as smooth as glass, and only the gentlest ocean swell rose and fell over the flat surface of the coral reef. In those days almost nothing was known of the people of the Paumotu Group except that they were a fierce and warlike race and excessively shy of white strangers. Standing on his quarter-deck Captain W—— could with his glass see that there were but a few houses on the island—perhaps ten—and as the frigate had been nearly six weeks out from Valparaiso, and officers in the navy did not live as luxuriously then as now, he decided to send a boat ashore and buy some turtle from the natives.

“If you can buy a few thousand cocoanuts as well, do so, Mr. T.,” said the captain, “and I’ll send another boat later on.”

The boat’s crew was well armed, and in command of the second lieutenant. Among them was a man named Hallam, a boatswain’s mate, a dark-faced, surly brute of about fifty. He was hated by nearly every one on board, but as he was a splendid seaman and rigidly exact in the performance of his duties, he was an especial favourite of the captain’s, who was never tired of extolling his abilities and sobriety, and holding him up as an example of a British seaman: and Hallam, like his captain, was a firm believer in the cat.

On pulling in to the beach about a dozen light-skinned natives met them. They were all armed with clubs and spears, but at a sign from one who seemed to be their chief they laid them down. All—the chief as well—were naked, save for a girdle of long grass round their loins.

Their leader advanced to Lieutenant T—— as he stepped out of the boat, and holding out his hand said, "Good mornin'. What you want?"

Pleased at finding a man who spoke English, the lieutenant told him he had come to buy some turtle and get a boatload of young cocoanuts, and showed him the tobacco and knives intended for payment.

The chief's eyes glistened at the tobacco; the others, who did not know its use, turned away in indifference, but eagerly handled the knives.

All this time the chief's eyes kept wandering to the face of Hallam, the boatswain's mate, whose every movement he followed with a curious, wistful expression. Suddenly he turned to the lieutenant and said, in curious broken English, that cocoanuts were easily to be obtained, but turtle were more difficult; yet if the ship would wait he would promise to get them as many as were wanted by daylight next morning.

"All right," said Lieutenant T——, "bear a hand with the cocoanuts now, and I'll tell the captain what you say"; and then to Hallam, "If this calm keeps up, Hallam, I'm afraid the ship will either have to anchor or tow off the land—she's drifting in fast."

In an hour the boat was filled with cocoanuts, and Lieutenant T—— sent her off to the ship with a

note to the captain, remaining himself with Hallam, another leading seaman named Lacy, and five blue-jackets. Presently the chief, in his strange, halting English, asked the officer to come to his house and sit down and rest while his wife prepared food for him. And as they walked the native's eyes still sought the face of Hallam the boatswain.

His wife was a slender, graceful girl, and her modest, gentle demeanour as she waited upon her husband himself impressed the lieutenant considerably.

"Where did you learn to speak English?" the officer asked his host after they had finished.

He answered slowly, "I been sailor man American whaleship two year;" and then, pointing to a roll of soft mats, said, "You like sleep, you sleep. Me like go talk your sailor man."

Hallam, morose and gloomy, had left the others, and was sitting under the shade of a *tea-tree*, when he heard the sound of a footstep, and looking up saw the dark-brown, muscular figure of the native chief beside him.

"Well," he said, surlily, "what the h—— do you want?"

The man made him no answer—only looked at him with a strange, eager light of expectancy in his eyes, and his lips twitched nervously, but no sound issued from them. For a moment the rude, scowling face of the old seaman seemed to daunt him. Then, with a curious choking sound in his throat, he sprang forward and touched the other man on the arm.

"*Fatber!* Don't you know me?"

With trembling hands and blanched face the old

man rose to his feet, and in a hoarse whisper there escaped from his lips a name that he had long years ago cursed and forgotten. His hands opened and shut again convulsively, and then his savage, vindictive nature asserted itself again as he found his voice, and with the rasping accents of passion poured out curses upon the brown, half-naked man that stood before him. Then he turned to go. But the other man put out a detaining hand.

“It is as you say. I am a disgraced man. But you haven’t heard why I deserted from the *Tagus*. Listen while I tell you. I was flogged. I was only a boy, and it broke my heart.”

“Curse you, you chicken-hearted sweep! I’ve laid the cat on the back of many a better man than myself, and none of ’em ever disgraced themselves by runnin’ away and turnin’ into a nigger, like you!”

The man heard the sneer with unmoved face, then resumed—

“It broke my heart. And when I was hiding in Dover, and my mother used to come and dress my wounds, do you remember what happened?”

“Aye, you naked swab, I do: your father kicked you out!”

“And I got caught again, and put in irons, and got more cat. Two years afterwards I cleared again in Sydney, from the *Sirius*. . . . And I came here to live and die among savages. That’s nigh on eight years ago.”

There was a brief silence. The old man, with

fierce, scornful eyes, looked sneeringly at the wild figure of the broken wanderer, and then said—

“What’s to stop me from telling our lieutenant you’re a deserter? I would, too, by God, only I don’t want my shipmates to know I’ve got a nigger for a son.”

The gibe passed unheeded, save for a sudden light that leapt into the eyes of the younger man, then quickly died away.

“Let us part in peace,” he said. “We will never meet again. Only tell me one thing—is my mother dead?”

“Yes.”

“Thank God for that,” he murmured. Then without another word the outcast turned away and disappeared among the cocoa-palms.

The second boat from the *Plsiades* brought the captain, and as he and the lieutenant stood and talked they watched the natives carrying down the cocoa-nuts.

“Hurry them up, Hallam,” said Lieutenant T——; “the tide is falling fast. By the by, where is that fellow Lacy; I don’t see him about?”

As he spoke a woman’s shriek came from the chief’s house, which stood some distance apart from the other houses, and a tall brown man sprang out from among the other natives about the boats and dashed up the pathway to the village.

“Quick, Hallam, and some of you fellows,” said Captain W——, “run and see what’s the matter. That scoundrel, Lacy, I suppose, among the women,” he added, with a laugh, to the lieutenant.

The two officers followed the men. In a few minutes they came upon a curious scene. Held in the strong arms of two stout seamen was the native chief, whose heaving chest and working features showed him to be under some violent emotion. On the ground, with his head supported by a shipmate, lay Lacy, with blackened and distorted face, and breathing stertorously. Shaking with fear and weeping passionately as she pressed her child to her bosom, the young native wife looked beseechingly into the faces of the men who held her husband.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Captain W——'s clear, sharp voice, addressing the men who held the chief.

"That hound there"—the men who held their prisoner nearly let him go in their astonishment—"came in here. She was alone. Do you want to know more? I tried to kill him."

"Let him loose, men," and Captain W—— stepped up to the prisoner and looked closely into his dark face. "Ah! I thought so—a white man. What is your name?"

The wanderer bent his head, then raised it, and looked for an instant at the sullen face of Hallam.

"I have no name," he said.

"Humph," muttered Captain W—— to his lieutenant, "a runaway convict, most likely. He can't be blamed, though, for this affair. He's a perfect brute, that fellow Lacy." Then to the strange white man he turned contemptuously :

"I'm sorry this man assaulted your wife. He shall suffer for it to-morrow. At the same time I'm sorry

I can't tie *you* up and flog you, as a disgrace to your colour and country, you naked savage."

The outcast took two strides, a red gleam shone in his eyes, and his voice shook with mad passion.

"'A naked savage'; and you would like to flog me. It was a brute such as you made me what I am," and he struck the captain of the *Pleiades* in the face with his clenched hand.

"We'll have to punish the fellow, T——," said Captain W——, as with his handkerchief to his lips he staunched the flow of blood. "If I let a thing like this pass his native friends would imagine all sorts of things and probably murder any unfortunate merchant captain that may touch here in the future. But, as Heaven is my witness, I do so on that ground only—deserter as he admits himself to be. Hurry up that fellow, T——."

"That fellow" was Hallam, who had been sent to the boat for a bit of line suitable for the purpose in view. His florid face paled somewhat when the coxswain jeeringly asked him if he didn't miss his green bag, and flung him an old pair of yoke-lines.

The business of flogging was not, on the whole, unduly hurried. Although "All Hands to Witness Punishment" was not piped, every native on the island, some seventy or so all told, gathered round the cocoanut-tree to which the man was lashed, and at every stroke of the heavy yoke-lines they shuddered. One, a woman with a child sitting beside her, lay face

to the ground, and as each cruel swish and thud fell on her ear the savage creature wept.

"That's enough, Hallam," said Captain W——, somewhat moved by the tears and bursting sobs of the pitying natives, who, when they saw the great blue weals on the brown back swell and black drops burst out, sought to break in through the cordon of blue jackets.

Clustering around him, the brown people sought to lift him in their arms and carry him to his house; but his strength was not all gone, and he thrust them aside. Then he spoke, and even the cold, passionless Captain W—— felt his face flush at the burning words:

"For seven years, lads, I've lived here, a naked savage, as your captain called me. I had a heavy disgrace once, an' it just broke my heart like—I was flogged—and I wanted to hide myself out of the world. Seven years it is since I saw a white man, an' I've almost forgotten I *was* a white man once; an' now because I tried to choke a hound that wanted to injure the only being in the world I have to love, I'm tied up and lashed like a dog—*by my own father!*

The island was just sinking below the horizon when the burly figure of boatswain's mate Hallam was seen to disappear suddenly over the bows, where he had been standing.

"A very regrettable occurrence," said Captain W——, pompously, to the chaplain when the boats

returned from the search. "No doubt the horror of seeing his only son a disgraced fugitive and severed from all decent associations preyed upon his mind and led him to commit suicide. Such men as Hallam, humble as was his position, are an Honour to the Service. I shall always remember him as a very zealous seaman."

"Particularly with the cat," murmured Lieutenant T—.

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